

INFORMAL COMMERCIAL NETWORKS, SOCIAL CONTROL, AND POLITICAL
POWER IN THE PROVINCE OF VENEZUELA, 1700-1757

By

JEREMY DAVID COHEN

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2003

Copyright 2003

by

Jeremy David Cohen

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study has been made possible by a Fulbright Student award (1999-2000) and the generous assistance of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, the United States Information Agency, and the Institute of International Education. I am especially grateful to Alan Burns of the Department of Anthropology, University of Florida, for his help during the Fulbright application process, and María Eugenia Méndez, of the United States Information Service in Venezuela, for her help during my year in Caracas. A Nutter Dissertation Fellowship from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Florida, has facilitated the final stages of writing.

I have incurred many debts at the University of Florida. The members of the Historical Archaeology Lab at the Florida Museum of Natural History have been my friends and collaborators since the fall of 1994. Thanks go to Kathleen Deagan, Maurice Williams, and Al Woods for their friendship and support. Myrna Sulsona deserves my gratitude for all the help she has given over the years. The Department of History's faculty and staff have aided me greatly during my graduate studies. I would particularly like to thank Jose Maria Corona, Betty Corwine, Linda Oppen, and especially Barbara Guynn for all of their efforts. I am grateful to Kathryn Burns, David Geggus, Sheryl Kroen, Murdo MacLeod, Jeffrey Needell, Mark Thurner, Maria Todorova, and especially Thomas Gallant for what they have taught me in and out of the classroom. Thanks go as well to the graduate coordinators, particularly Thomas Gallant, Louise Newman, and Hunt Davis for their support. The personnel of the University of Florida Libraries have

also facilitated my studies. I would like to acknowledge in particular Richard Phillips and the staff of the Latin American Collection for their invariable assistance and Bruce Chappell of the Special Collections for his guidance in archival research. Susan Duser at Academic Technology's Graphics department drafted the maps included in this study.

I have learned a great deal from the many conversations I have had with Greg Eyma and Fred Smith about Caribbean history and culture, as well as from exchanges with Reuben Zahler concerning Venezuelan history. Fred Rowley and Elaine Toribio have been close friends regardless of distance. Belkis Suárez read drafts of the following chapters and made beneficial comments on them. I also thank her for our ongoing discussion of contemporary Venezuelan society, which has helped clarify in my mind what this study is and is not about.

I have also contracted numerous debts in Venezuela. Ricardo Leizaola provided vital initial information on contacts. The efforts of Elías Pino Iturrieta of the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello and Guillermo Morón of the Academia Nacional de la Historia made possible my work at the academy. Most of my time in Venezuela was spent in the Archivo General de la Nación in Caracas. I am grateful to Guillermo Briceño Porras and Vicente Romero, past and current director, respectively, for making me feel welcome there. I would also like to recognize the following individuals who made visits to the archive pleasant and productive: Angel Manzanilla, Frank Bermúdez, Ramona de Dáger, Licenciada Doris Hurtado, Luisa, José Vicente, Alexandra, Honorio, and Douglas and the boys from the Foro Libertador basement. Many thanks go to Andrés Gorrín, María Li Vigni, and Coro Venezuela Ortiz for their reading room companionship. Ermila Troconis de Veracoechea, director of the Archivo and Departamento de Investigaciones of the

Academia Nacional de la Historia, facilitated my consultation of the academy's materials. The researchers at the Departamento de Investigaciones, in particular Juan Carlos Reyes and Fausto Torella, provided crucial assistance. My visits to the Palacio de las Academias were made all the more enjoyable by Delia Medina and Gloria de Mujica. Thanks go as well to Sister Juanita and the staff at the Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Caracas. Luciana de Stefano of the Instituto de Filología Andrés Bello, Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV), kindly made available the institute's extensive resources on Venezuelan Spanish. I also benefited from talking with Emanuel Amodio of the Departamento de Antropología, UCV. At the Biblioteca Nacional, Jorge López Falcón of the Departamento de Libros Raros y Manuscritos gave valuable initial guidance, and Anunziata Pellegrino of the Oficina de Atención a Investigadores helped me consult numerous sources at the library. I was able to review the Actas del Cabildo de Caracas at the Biblioteca del Consejo Municipal thanks to Guillermo Durand and Alejandro Valderrama of the Oficina del Cronista de Caracas. Finally, my very special thanks go to Ramón Aizpurua of the Escuela de Historia, UCV, who has unsparingly shared with me his knowledge of Venezuelan archives, historiography, and smuggling.

The Suárez Faillace family has treated me with kindness since my first visit to Caracas in 1997. My parents, Jerome and Madeleine Cohen, have been unwavering in their support.

I am privileged to have had two admirable mentors at the University of Florida. Kathleen Deagan, who guided my studies in the Department of Anthropology, and Murdo MacLeod, who has overseen my work in the Department of History, have taught me

much about scholarship and professionalism. My deep appreciation and respect go to them both.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
ABSTRACT	x
INTRODUCTION: SMUGGLING IN CONTEXT	1
State Power and the International Stimulants Trades, Past and Present	1
Instability, Unpredictability, and Informality	8
Curaçao and Venezuela in the Eighteenth Century.....	12
The Present Study	17
AN OVERVIEW OF VENEZUELA'S COMMERCIAL CONNECTIONS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	23
Introduction: The Expansion of the Dutch Seaborne Empire into the Caribbean	23
Legal Trade with Spain and the Canary Islands	30
Legal Trade with New Spain	34
Caribbean Circuits: Audiencia de Santo Domingo, French Islands, and Curaçao	35
Internal Commerce within the Province of Venezuela	50
GOVERNORS, GROCERS, AND GOONS: THE DYNAMICS OF SMUGGLING AND ANTI-SMUGGLING IN CARACAS	52
Caracas, Capital of the Province of Venezuela.....	52
The Quiet Trade through La Guaira.....	58
The Governors' Focus on Caracas: Tools and Tactics.....	61
Don Marcos de Betancourt y Castro, Governor of Venezuela	70
Don Diego de Matos Montañés Crosses the Line.....	80
Don Domingo Rodríguez Tinoco and Challenges to the Governor's Power	83
Venezuela's Subordination to the Viceroyalty of New Granada.....	86
The Governorship of Venezuela after Betancourt	89
Conclusion.....	91
GEOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION AND THE TOBACCO TRADE IN VALENCIA	94
Puerto Cabello.....	102

Agua Caliente.....	109
Valencia.....	111
Valencia's Second Route.....	116
Guacara, San Diego, and Los Guayos.....	120
Yagua.....	128
Turiamo.....	130
Patanemo.....	133
Justice of the Peace Joseph Luis Felipes and the Forsaken Hitch.....	135
Conclusion.....	137
 NIRGUA: FEAR OF A PARDO REPUBLIC.....	 139
Introduction.....	139
Patterns of Production and Settlement.....	144
Nirgua as Seen from Without.....	152
Local Autonomy and the Limits of Authority.....	157
The Periphery's Periphery: Borders and Border Settlements.....	170
Morón, Nirgua's Pivot.....	178
Conclusion.....	198
 CIVIL AND CLERICAL SYNDICATES ON THE SAN FELIPE FRONTIER.....	 200
Introduction: San Felipe el Fuerte.....	200
The Yaracuy River Valley: The Early Years of Cocorote and Barquisimeto.....	201
The Civil Network: San Felipe and Don Juan Angel de Larrea.....	210
The Mission Network: The Capuchins of the Yaracuy River Valley.....	224
The Systems Break Down I: The 1741 Sublevación.....	244
The Systems Break Down II: The Transfer of the Missions to Secular Authority..	252
Conclusion.....	257
 CONCLUSION: THE RESILIENCE OF INFORMALITY IN EIGHTEENTH- CENTURY VENEZUELA.....	 260
Curaçao and Venezuela in the Atlantic Context.....	261
Spanish Imperial Concerns and Local Arrangements.....	264
The Flexibility of Informality in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela.....	267
Smuggling: A Colonial Cultural Legacy?.....	276
Friends, Foes, Strangers, and Opportune Enforcement.....	279
 GLOSSARY.....	 281
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	 287
 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	 313

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>page</u>
1 Venezuela and the Caribbean in the Eighteenth Century.....	13
2 The Province of Venezuela in the Early Eighteenth Century	16
3 The District of Caracas	57
4 The District of Valencia	98
5 The District of Nirgua	143
6 The District of San Felipe	202

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

INFORMAL COMMERCIAL NETWORKS, SOCIAL CONTROL, AND POLITICAL
POWER IN THE PROVINCE OF VENEZUELA, 1700-1757

By

Jeremy David Cohen

May 2003

Chair: Murdo J. MacLeod
Major Department: History

This study analyzes the social forces that contributed to or hindered the consolidation of smuggling networks in eighteenth-century Venezuela. It traces the formation, modification, and dissolution of extra-legal commercial undertakings in the colony's four coastal districts: Caracas, Valencia, Nirgua, and San Felipe. The social and spatial patterning of smuggling was distinct in each region, but all four reveal the integration of vertically organized systems of patronage, extended family, affinities and loyalties based on common origin, control over the means of production and transportation, and access to political power in the creation of durable extra-legal enterprises. These practices were well entrenched by the time the Bourbon state made its first moves towards greater commercial and political centralization. The extension of the governor's political authority across the province and the implementation of the Royal Guipuzcoa Company's trade monopoly yielded contradictory, unexpected consequences. The policies had clear success in countering some trade with Curaçao, but they also

contributed in some instances to the expansion of smuggling and the strengthening of local political autonomy rather than its debilitation.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION: SMUGGLING IN CONTEXT

Eu sei que me acusam de estar subendo na vida a custo do dinero do contrabando. Mais sepa, Fonseca, que jamais passou pela cabeça que fazer contrabando fosse um crime. Pelo contrario, entendo que a cobranza de direitos aduaneiros e uma extorção disfarçada, o sea, o estado mete a mão na bolsa de cada um sem merecer nada em troca.

—*O Testamento do Sr. Napumoceno*¹

Obedezco pero no cumplo.

—Saying from colonial Spanish America²

State Power and the International Stimulants Trades, Past and Present

The contemporary Caribbean plays an important role in satisfying North Atlantic demand for stimulants. Three internationally proscribed commodities flow through the region, most often moving east and north to the United States and Western Europe.

Caribbean-grown marijuana competes with Colombian and Mexican products for primacy in the United States import market. The region also serves to transfer narcotics produced elsewhere in Latin America. Cocaine has for the last 30 years been the most conspicuous commodity, but in recent years the traffic in heroin has increasingly been routed through the Caribbean to move it from its points of production in Colombia to its points of consumption in the United States and Europe. The U.S. federal government's

¹ From a conversation between Napumoceno de Araujo, an import-export businessman, and his good friend Fonseca, the notary public of the city of Mindelo, São Vicente, Cape Verde Islands, in the film *O Testamento do Sr. Napumoceno* (Portugal/Cape Verde), produced and directed by Francisco Manso, 1 hr. 50 min., California Newsreel, 1998, videocassette. In English: "I know I have been accused of having risen in life on the back of money from smuggling. But know this, Fonseca, I have never once thought that smuggling was a crime. On the contrary, I think that charging customs duties is a disguised form of extortion, that is, the state puts its hand in everyone's pocket without offering anything in return."

² Common response made by viceroys in America to the Crown when they were unable or unwilling to enact legislation. Also rendered as "Se acata pero no se cumplo." Quoted in Charles Gibson, *Spain in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967 [1966]), p. 94. In English, "I obey but I do not fulfill."

efforts to clamp down on cocaine smuggling through the state of Florida helped produce a decline in the Caribbean traffic in the stimulant in the early 1990s and a reorientation towards Central American and Mexican routes. Nonetheless, the demand from the east side of the Atlantic has helped push the Caribbean's resurgence as a cocaine trafficking bridge, especially, but not exclusively, the islands on the Caribbean Sea's eastern edge.³

Like its neighbors to the north and east, Venezuela has also seen an increase in narcotics trafficking through its national territory, international airports, and across its sovereign waters. The recent massive confiscations of processed cocaine and heroin in formal ports like Puerto Cabello and informal ones like Río Caribe and Güiria attest to the country's expanding role as a transfer area for large amounts of narcotics, as well as the consolidation of an extensive and large-scale smuggling infrastructure that joins Venezuela with cultivators and processors in Colombia, other bridges like Trinidad and the islands of the Lesser Antilles, and ultimately the consuming populations of the North Atlantic. Venezuela has moved beyond the small-scale operations done by individuals through airports, often women commonly referred to as *mulas*. And as U.S. surveillance in the Caribbean and the joint operations of U.S. military with Colombian and other national security forces make cocaine export through Central America and the Caribbean more difficult, Venezuela should play a greater role in the transport of narcotics from the Colombian Andes to the international waters and airspace of the Atlantic Ocean.⁴

³ Ivelaw L. Griffith, ed., *The Political Economy of Drugs in the Caribbean* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); idem, "Drugs and Economics in the Caribbean," in Irma T. Alonso, ed., *Caribbean Economies in the Twenty-First Century* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), pp. 177-201; and Anthony P. Maingot, "The Decentralization Imperative and Caribbean Criminal Enterprises," in Tom Farer, ed., *Transnational Crime in the Americas* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 143-170.

⁴ Karenina Velandía, "Un operativo sorpresa llevó a 'León Cachito' a la cárcel," *El Nacional*, Sunday, October 6, 2002; and idem, "Al benefactor de Güiria le aguarda una sentencia por narcotráfico," *El Nacional*, Sunday, October 6, 2002.

The influence of North Atlantic demand for stimulants—luxuries and staples—on the Caribbean is not new.⁵ Nor is the illegality of a large portion of the trade, or Caribbean entrepreneurs' recurring disregard of international norms governing commodity transport and exchange.⁶ Nor is the inability or unwillingness on the part of states in the region to regulate or eliminate activities that violate national and international commercial and penal codes. Their failure to control extra-legal transnational activities like drug smuggling, arms running, and mercenary activity, and their dependence on other nation-states or international governing bodies belies the claims to sovereignty made by and expected of many nation-states.⁷

The nation-state, which claims monopoly control over violence and dispute adjudication within its sovereign territory and whose territorial authority is legitimized by mutual recognition by other nation-states, has been since the nineteenth century the hegemonic standard in the modern inter-state system. In practice, however, it has not

⁵ The most famous and most studied of these tropical products is, of course, sugar. Barry Higman summarizes the impact of sugar on the region and the debates over this influence in his "The Sugar Revolution," *Economic History Review* 53:2 (2000), pp. 213-236. For a synthesis of the place of the stimulants trade in the development of capitalism, see Eric R. Wolf's *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997 [1982]), pp. 332-346.

⁶ Pieter Emmer, "The Dutch in the Making of the Second Atlantic System," in his *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy, 1580-1880* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1998), pp. 11-32, especially pp. 16-17; Antonio Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, second edition (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996 [1992]), pp. 43-51; Ramón Aizpurua, "Otra cara de la resistencia: Venezuela en el siglo XVIII," in his *Temas de historia colonial de Venezuela y del Caribe* (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1996), pp. 115-120; Kathleen A. Deagan and José María Cruzent, "Destinies Converged," in their *Columbus's Outpost among the Tainos: Spain and America at La Isabela* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 213-227, especially pp. 226-227; Michiel Baud, "A Colonial Counter Economy: Tobacco Production on Española, 1500-1870," *New West Indian Guide* 65:1 & 2 (1991), pp. 27-49; and Dennis Conway, "Microstates in a Macroworld," in Thomas Klak, ed., *Globalization and Neoliberalism: The Caribbean Context* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998), pp. 51-63, especially pp. 61-62.

⁷ This point is made repeatedly in the essays in Farer, ed., *Transnational Crime in the Americas*. See also Peter Andreas, "When Policies Collide: Market Reform, Market Prohibition, and the Narcotization of the Mexican Economy," in H. Richard Friman and Peter Andreas, eds., *The Illicit Global Economy and State Power* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999), pp. 125-141.

been a common phenomenon. In fact, most states have failed to measure up to the high bar of monopoly, legitimacy, and sovereignty. The deeply entrenched assumption about state authority and hegemony obscures the many forms states have taken and sets a standard that has proven, barring the extraordinary exceptions, impossible to achieve.⁸

Even today, at a time when over two-hundred nation-states exist and mutually acknowledge each other as such, state monopoly over violence, even though it is claimed, is rarely enjoyed and inconsistently exercised, as is state hegemony in assigning legitimacy and settling conflicts.⁹ Other standards compete with those set by the nation-state model and in some cases prevail. Such arrangements have characterized most states in the modern world system. The exceptions, in fact, have come recently: powerful, centralized states with socialized militaries, centrally controlled systems of revenue extraction and accounting, and national police forces subordinate to the central government.¹⁰ These few not only claim but also effectively exercise a monopoly of

⁸ Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (London: Verso, 1996 [1994]), pp. 76-80; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995 [1990]), p. 204; idem, "Reflections on the History of European State Making," in Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 3-83; Laurie Benton, "Colonial Law and Cultural Difference: Jurisdictional Politics and the Formation of the Colonial State," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41:3 (1999), pp. 563-588; and idem, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁹ Robert Jackson goes so far as to call "quasi-states" those states that fail to meet the standards set for the nation-state. Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) and Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue, "State Power and Social Forces: On Political Contention and Accommodation in the Third World," in Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, eds., *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 293-326. Preston E. James, writing about mid-twentieth-century Latin American nation-states, distinguishes the "total national territory" from the "effective national territory." See Maps 1 and 2 of his *Introduction to Latin America: The Geographic Background of Economic and Political Problems* (New York: Odyssey Press, 1964), pp. 6-7, 8, as well as the discussion in pp. 6-11.

¹⁰ Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Evans et al., eds. *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 169-191, especially p. 181. See also

violence within their borders and hence sever what had been, for centuries, the strong union of trade and violence.¹¹ In most state societies, “central control over the means of violence” has been “weak or absent” and therefore the rules of social interaction dictated by the state and the mechanisms for addressing their infraction—in other words, legal codes and juridical procedures—have not been the primary determinant of legitimacy, morality or propriety.¹²

The contradiction between the rhetoric of state authority and practice is relatively recent, as is the negative assessment of those states that fail to back their claims with action. Before the nineteenth century, before the formation of national military forces, which expressed the state’s effective monopoly over violence, the divide between legitimate and illegitimate violence was not clearly drawn. Likewise, commerce, production, and military action, as well as conflict resolution, realized outside of the bounds set by state institutions, did not necessarily represent challenges to state authority. Central states, local magnates, and their clients developed compacts in which the law was one of many tools used to right wrongs and set standard for social interactions, and legal compliance was one of various standards, and not always the primary one, for

Janice E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

¹¹ Anton Blok, in *Honour and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), p. ix, argues that for too long scholars have assumed the advances of the modern nation-state to be the norm against which states and societies should be judged, and the ultimate shape all state societies would take: “In the conceptualization of society, the bounded, integrated, and pacified nation-state has long been a major paragon.” Also see Josiah McC. Heyman and Alan Smart, “States and Illegal Practices: An Overview,” in Josiah McC. Heyman, ed., *States and Illegal Practices* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), pp. 8-11, for similar claims that the hegemonic state is an historical rarity of very recent origin. They identify a watershed in the turn of the nineteenth century. See also Gary T. Marx, “Ironies of Social Control: Authorities as Contributors to Deviance Through Escalation, Nonenforcement, and Covert Facilitation,” *Social Problems* 28:3 (1981), pp. 221-246.

¹² Blok, *Honour and Violence*, p. ix.

determining the legitimacy of social action. These arrangements, loose or even inconsistent if judged by today's standards, gave states and empires strength and longevity. The Pax Romana was founded in part on Rome's chronic willingness to accept ranging autonomy for provincial elites in exchange for fealty. The three-hundred year Pax Hispánica in the New World was fortified by similar accords that joined provincial and imperial concerns.

States, like organized crime enterprises, offer protection.¹³ Their strategies for convincing potential clients and retaining established ones vary widely, but both tender safekeeping from mistreatment by others and by themselves. Weak imperial states of the early modern period, like Spain, were willing to accept the existence of other protection rackets so long as they did not threaten the overall imperial structure, but which did guarantee social stability, safety from foreign invasion, and some revenues. Sometimes the imperial state has no choice in the matter, forced to choose between a loose loyalty or none at all and usually acquiescing to the former.¹⁴

The Province of Venezuela in the first half of the eighteenth century was governed by a weak yet stable colonial state, one that did not exercise an effective monopoly over violence, revenue extraction, or commerce, although it claimed and insisted on all three.¹⁵ The Spanish Crown, through its representative, the governor, in the provincial capital and

¹³ Tilly, "War Making and State Making." See also Anton Blok's *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860-1960* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975) and Diego Gambetta's *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹⁴ Joel S. Migdal, "Introduction: Developing a State-In-Society Perspective," in Migdal et al., *State Power and Social Forces*, pp. 1-4.

¹⁵ For discussions of the role of monopolies over coercive power and revenue extraction in the development of the state, see Thomas C. Schelling, "Economics and Criminal Enterprise," *The Public Interest* 7 (1967), pp. 61-78; Douglass C. North, "Transaction Costs in History," *Journal of European Economic History* 14 (1985), pp. 557-559, 563, 571-571; Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making," pp. 169-170; and idem, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*, pp. 16-37, 67-95.

his representatives in the interior, delegated to local elites, local magnates, and local colonial officials the responsibilities of social control, revenue extraction, and monopoly trade compliance. The Spanish state, especially before the Bourbon reforms of the late eighteenth century, was not a monolithic presence. It relied on a hodgepodge of institutions, interest groups, and players united in their loyalty to God and King but dissonant in their ways of expressing their fealty. Weak in character, it depended on local elites to keep its overseas possessions loyal and peaceful. As MacLeod argues for Central America in the long seventeenth century, the Crown contracted out.¹⁶ And an important, unwritten clause in the compact was the permission granted to local elites to ignore, bend, and violate the laws they were supposed to uphold and enforce. In return, they guarded against the Crown's main fears: "regional revolt and group disaffection."¹⁷ The Crown was less concerned about its laws being broken or gutted and more concerned about maintaining social order.

Hence the Spanish state earned legitimacy and secured relative stability through its leniency, through its recurring inclination to overlook and thereby tacitly approve recurring violations of its own codified norms. Service in and support for colonial administration brought with them the widespread yet unstated prerogative to use one's position for what we today might consider personal gain and to pursue this often outside

¹⁶ Murdo J. MacLeod, "The Primitive Nation State, Delegation of Functions and Results: Some Examples from Early Colonial Central America," in Karen Spalding, ed., *Essays in the Political, Economic and Social History of Latin America* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Latin American Studies Program, 1982), p. 54.

¹⁷ Ibid.

of the law.¹⁸ Selling cacao, tobacco, and hides to the Dutch in exchange for textiles was, then, acceptable for some, indeed expected.¹⁹

This produced long-term peace and relative stability at the imperial level but at the cost of pushing violence, repression and violent conflict outward to the imperial peripheries and downwards onto the powerless.²⁰ It also contributed to the formation of local mechanisms for securing advantage and regularity in a volatile world.

Instability, Unpredictability, and Informality

The inhabitants of eighteenth-century Venezuela lived unstable and unpredictable lives. They suffered the inherent tenuousness of a non-industrialized, agriculturally based, rural society that produced cash crops for overseas markets and was subject to sudden changes in numerous factors beyond their immediate control. Instability came from various fronts: droughts, blights, floods, epidemics, war, shifts in overseas demand, loss of access to overseas labor supplies, sudden adjustments in capital markets, competition from rival producing areas, commercial and military repercussions in the Caribbean of the deals struck and broken by monarchs in Europe. These, combined with

¹⁸ "The subject of states and illegal practices . . . demands a very different starting-point from legal and policy formalism: recognizing that illegality does not necessarily mean that activities are illegitimate when there are incomplete hegemonies and partial, often compromised practices of the state." Heyman and Smart, "States and Illegal Practices," p. 8. Or, I would add, when state apparatus depend heavily on informal institutions, in which case personal gain fortifies the state.

¹⁹ I use Dutch here to mean foreign traders for two reasons. First, most of the illicit exchange in the period under consideration was done with Dutch traders from Curaçao. Second, a common phrase used by witnesses and colonial officials in the testimony and reports included in contraband trials referred to "comercio ilícito" as "tratar con el holandés."

²⁰ Outward and downward pushing borrowed from Murdo J. MacLeod, "Some Thoughts on the Pax Colonial, Colonial Violence, and Perceptions of Both," in Susan Schroeder, ed., *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), pp. 129-142, specifically p. 142. MacLeod argues this compact between Crown and local magnates explains the coexistence of long-term imperial peace with chronic, quotidian violence suffered by those at the bottom of the colonial social hierarchy, pp. 139-142.

the continuously smoldering conflicts and adjustments between local elites and colonial government, and between local power structures contending for the same resources—chief among them access to Dutch traders along the coast—created a setting in which production, transport, and exchange were carried out with permanent insecurity.²¹

The anxiety was compounded because so much foreign trade was realized outside the law, often with foreigners. Venezuelan smugglers faced multiple risks. Transactions with foreign traders could easily and often did break down into forced exchange, or at times worse, into robbery and kidnapping. They also risked having their goods forcibly taken on the way to market. On top of this, they faced persecution from representatives of the colonial government. Smugglers coped with these possible threats in various ways. One obvious way was to travel and trade well armed or accompanied by well-armed violent entrepreneurs.²² Other strategies were less openly violent, although the ability to bring force to bear underpinned most of them.

Such pervasive instability and unpredictability—in agricultural production, in infrastructure, and in exchange—fostered four coping and maximizing strategies, especially for those who sought to participate regularly in extra-legal trade. Their division here is heuristic. In practice, residents of the province called upon and enacted

²¹ For a discussion of impact of instability and unpredictability on political culture in a contemporary Caribbean setting, see Harry Hoetink's "The Dominican Republic in the Twentieth Century: Notes on Mobility and Stratification," *New West Indian Guide* 74:3 & 4 (2000), pp. 209-233, especially p. 218. See also James C. Scott, *Comparative Political Corruption* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), particularly pp. viiii-ix, pp. 1-19; idem, "Corruption, Machine Politics, and Political Change," *American Political Science Review* 63:4 (1969), pp. 1142-1158; and idem, "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia," *American Political Science Review* 66:1 (1972), pp. 91-113.

²² The term "violent entrepreneurs" is borrowed from Thomas W. Gallant's "Brigandage, Piracy, Capitalism, and State-Formation: Transnational Crime from a Historical World-Systems Perspective," in Heyman, ed., *States and Illegal Practices*, pp. 25-61.

all four without distinguishing between them. In fact, each strategy was fortified by the others.

The first might be called "Get it while you can."²³ A well-honed practice of salaried and fee-earning officials throughout Spain's American colonies, this strategy characterized much of government and business in the province. Governors arrived in the colony deeply in debt and dragging a train of family, friends, and other hangers-on who had to be fed, clothed, housed, and, ideally, gainfully employed. Patrons often set them up in positions that presented numerous opportunities to charge official and unofficial fees, positions that saw considerable cash flow. The governors themselves had but a few years to pay off their debts. These included not just the original one for the *futura* and those taken out to cover travel to the new post, but also those incurred with local merchants in the colony. On top of this, governors had to plan for the future: in the short term, making sure they had enough cash on hand at the end of their term to insure a smooth *residencia*; and in the long term, securing enough capital to have a pension for after their careers in the colonial administration.

The governors' subordinates had similar concerns, though at increasingly smaller scales moving down the colonial bureaucratic hierarchy: the lieutenant governor, the treasury officials, fortress commanders, justices of the peace, all the way down to the head of the royal jail. The same applied to municipal government, as most cabildo posts required some outlay of funds either before or during tenure in office. And debt, in a society where capital was often scarce, was at times difficult to eliminate. The difficulty of paying off debts in specie helped create two related phenomena: first, a large body of

²³ Pilfered from Janis Joplin.

public officials chronically in debt, and second, nonfiscal methods of squaring accounts. This second reinforced the role of reciprocity in colonial administration and society.²⁴

Debt, either money owed or favors due, meant trust and obligation. In this sense, it was both burden and boon. The problem of debt, credit, and indebtedness leads to the second strategy, which, borrowing from social anthropology, I will call "Wealth in people."²⁵ In a setting of great instability and questionable formal institutional legitimacy, people invested their energy in and committed their resources to stable resources, informal institutions like family, fictive kin, and extensive patronage networks. They invested in people, using the ties of real and fictive kinship as a means to mobilize a volatile yet constant resource.

The third strategy is closely related to the first two. It may be called "Hedge your bets," or "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." With the risks of mishaps so high, inhabitants of the colony made sure they did not commit all their material and social capital to one source or outlet. Cacao, Venezuela's main export, was in demand in three markets—the Dutch, the Mexican, and the Spanish. Ideally, cacao producers would sell their crop in all three markets, although only the most wealthy and well connected producers achieved such distribution. Nonetheless, their guiding concern was not legality but the assurance of some profit in a very volatile commercial context. Itinerant traders and mule train owners who moved goods clandestinely across the province had to make

²⁴ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, translated by W.D. Halls (London: Routledge, 1990 [1950]).

²⁵ The classic structural Marxist statement on this comes from Claude Meillassoux, "From Reproduction to Production: A Marxist Approach to Economic Anthropology," *Economy and Society* 1 (1972), pp. 93-105. Here I argue that the social and ideational structures often attributed to the kinship-based mode of production were retained and even fortified, at least in colonial Spanish America, by the tributary mode of production. For the distinctions among these modes, see Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, pp. 73-100.

sure they appeased numerous local authorities. They, therefore, hedged their bets by establishing links with *tenientes*, *corregidores*, and *cabildo* members to insure against confrontations, which would result in total loss.²⁶

The fourth strategy is a tendency towards horizontal and vertical monopoly, again applicable to material and social resources. Although the results were usually partial and circumscribed, colonial administrators, merchants, and landowners tried to pull under their control, or under the control of their extended family and patronage-based networks, as many of the resources involved in as many productive processes as possible.²⁷

Curaçao and Venezuela in the Eighteenth Century

One of the most coveted resources during this period was access to the Dutch traders who frequented the Venezuelan coast and connected the province with the Caribbean trade center of Curaçao and the Atlantic economy beyond. The island of Curaçao, located just off the Coro coast in western Venezuela, had served initially as a staging ground and military outpost for raids and exploratory excursions into the

²⁶ One important consequence of this strategy was the discouragement of corporate institutions, especially commercial firms but also guilds or craft-based fraternities. Susan Migden Socolow finds that firms in eighteenth-century Buenos Aires were short lived, built on personal connections. "At most a firm's commercial life was synonymous with the life of the individual trader." Susan Migden Socolow, *The Merchants of Buenos Aires: Family and Commerce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 60. For another example from the eighteenth-century River Plate, see Lyman L. Johnson, "The Silversmiths of Buenos Aires: A Case Study in the Failure of Corporate Social Organization," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 8:2 (1976), pp. 181-213.

²⁷ Students of colonial Spanish American history have identified this strategy among elites. John E. Kicza makes similar arguments about the commercial elite of eighteenth-century Mexico City in his *Colonial Entrepreneurs: Families and Business in Bourbon Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983) and idem, "The Great Families of Mexico: Elite Maintenance and Business Practices in Late Colonial Mexico City," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 62:3 (1982), pp. 429-457. See also, for eighteenth-century Buenos Aires, Socolow, *The Merchants of Buenos Aires*. For Venezuela, see Robert J. Ferry, *The Colonial Elite of Caracas: Formation and Crisis, 1567-1767* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) and Elizabeth Ladera de Díez, *Contribución al estudio de la aristocracia territorial en Venezuela colonial: La Familia Xérez de Aristiguieta, siglo 18* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1990).

Caribbean, which was until the early seventeenth century an exclusive Spanish domain (see Figure 1).²⁸

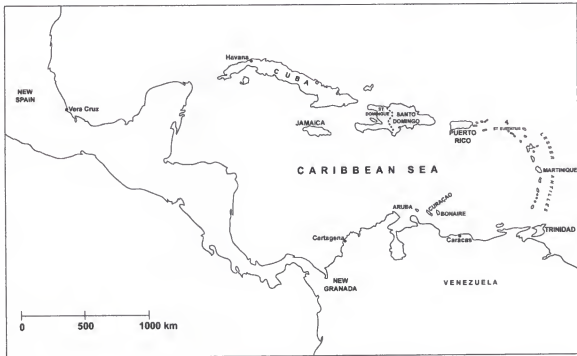


Figure 1. Venezuela and the Caribbean in the Eighteenth Century

Taken from meager Spanish control in 1634, Curaçao served as the military base of operations for the first rendering of the Dutch West Indies Company, a joint-stock company that concentrated on violent commercial forays and the debilitation of Spanish control over its American empire. The island's occupation and the company's incorporation formed part of the Dutch war effort to secure independence from Spain.

The closing of the war and the coming of Dutch independence in 1648 brought a reorientation in the United Provinces' New World strategy, especially for the Caribbean.

²⁸ For the history of the Dutch occupation and colonization of Curaçao, see C.R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990 [1965]); Cornelis Ch. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast, 1580-1680* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1971); idem, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas, 1680-1791* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1985); Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); and Wim Klooster, *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648-1795* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998).

The republic gave up on territorial expansion at the expense of the Spanish Crown and abandoned the more violent, spectacular, yet infrequent trading expeditions to Spanish ports around the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. The Dutch turned to smuggling. To the Caribbean Sea were transferred the lessons learned and resources developed in Europe and Asia: first, in the Baltic Sea trade, in which the Dutch United Provinces, and the city of Amsterdam in particular, had become themselves the financial and commercial hub for northern Europe; and second and more important, in East Asia, in which the Dutch East Indian Company had secured dominance over long-distance shipping and controlled the European supply of spices and other Asian luxuries. The Dutch trading empire of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, driven by the expanding European demand for raw materials and stimulants, satisfied these needs first through Amsterdam and then through the peripheral hubs that marked the extent of its reach in the East and West Indies. Dutch merchants and sea captains based out of Curaçao secured access to Venezuelan raw materials through their contacts with planters, colonial officials, and vendors on the mainland as well as through their collaboration with Curaçao-based brokers from Venezuela, especially priests assigned by the Bishop of Caracas to serve the island's Catholic population.

The second founding of the Dutch West Indies Company in 1674 exemplified the United Province's policy shift in the imperial struggle to extract New World products. The monopoly trade company was charged with making the island into the Caribbean's biggest warehouse for European comestibles and finished goods and American tropical commodities. The island's privileged position immediately off the coast of Venezuela helped Dutch traders tap into the mainland colony's expanding agricultural export

economy. Curaçao was transformed into the entrepôt of the south Caribbean, mimicking in many ways the role Amsterdam has secured over the previous century as entrepôt and financial center for the Baltic Sea trade and the long-distance East Indies trade.

Curaçao was often a more consistent source for European goods than Spain. The infrequency with which ships from Spain reached Venezuela was compounded by the prohibitively high prices of the legally imported goods that did reach the province. European imports were taxed repeatedly as they moved from Spain to their final destination in the New World. Export duties, import duties, sales taxes, and various levies charged to support Spanish maritime efforts against corsairs and foreign smugglers drove the price of imports far above the buying power of most residents of Venezuela. On top of this were the various charges imposed by provincial authorities who charged fees for permission to store and transport goods in their respective jurisdictions. Smuggling, then, presented a steady price advantage for colonial subjects who looked to sell their tropical products and obtain European imports. The Dutch paid a higher price for cacao than the legally sanctioned buyers, offered textiles and other finished goods at lower prices than the Spanish, and helped reduce freight rates and the risks of transportation by trading in the many coastal valleys and inlets along the Venezuelan coast. Plus the trade with the Dutch was tax free, at least for the Venezuelans.

The European demand for New World raw materials and stimulants quickened during the eighteenth century, and Venezuelan agriculture and Curaçaoan commerce kept pace.²⁹ More lands came under cultivation, more slaves, peons and wage-earning

²⁹ The ties between European consumption and New World production of agricultural commodities—tropical stimulants in particular—and the cultural and social consequences of these ties have best been explored by Sidney W. Mintz for the case of sugar, in his *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985). For the price history of commodities traded

laborers concentrated in Venezuela's coastal valleys, and more residents of the province, creole and foreign born, directed their attention to the lucrative and growing trade with Curaçao. The Dutch on Curaçao, for their part, followed the spreading cacao frontier with their sloops and ships and thereby expanded the sphere of extra-legal coastal exchange. Venezuela had become during the last fifty years of the seventeenth century Curaçao's main trading partner and would remain so until the end of the eighteenth century. During this same period, Curaçao grew to rival the province's two leading export markets, Spain and New Spain. In the province's peripheral districts, especially west of Caracas, the Dutch island colony was the leading trading partner, sometimes the only one (see Figure 2).³⁰

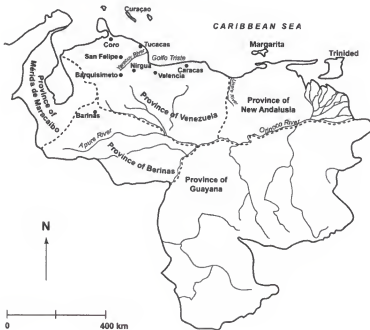


Figure 2. The Province of Venezuela in the Early Eighteenth Century

on the Amsterdam commodities exchange, see Nicolaas Wilhelmus Posthumus, *Inquiry into the History of Prices in Holland* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1943).

³⁰ The following chapter, "An Overview of Venezuela's Commercial Connections in the Early Eighteenth Century," will describe these trading circuits in greater detail.

These extra-legal commercial practices were well entrenched by the time the Bourbon state made its first moves towards greater commercial and political centralization. The extension of the governor's political authority across the province, through the office of the justice of the peace, and the implementation of the trade monopoly granted to the Royal Guipuzcoa Company of Caracas (hereinafter RCG) yielded contradictory, unexpected consequences. The policies had clear success in countering some trade with Curaçao, but they also contributed in some instances to the expansion of smuggling and the strengthening of local political autonomy rather than its debilitation. Most work to date on smuggling has concentrated on the shifts in Crown policy, the efforts to suppress, and the confrontations between representatives of European powers, usually on the high seas. Little is known about how the trade was organized within Spain's American colonies, how colonial subjects delivered goods to and from the points of furtive exchange. This study examines smuggling and smuggling enterprises in the province's four coastal jurisdictions of Caracas, Valencia, Nirgua, and San Felipe during the first half of the eighteenth century.³¹

The Present Study

To do this I have turned to the criminal records that resulted from the efforts to suppress or eliminate extra-legal trade and transport in the Province of Venezuela. Known in the eighteenth century as *casos de comisos*, these investigative and judicial procedures served to determine the legal status of confiscated goods and the culpability of the individuals accused of transporting or trading them outside of the law. The term *comiso* referred to confiscations in general or the captured goods themselves.

³¹ For further discussion of the work on smuggling in colonial Spanish America and related issues, please see the bibliographical essay in the Bibliography.

Confiscations that took place at sea were known as *presas*; those that took place on land were referred to as *descaminos*. I have concentrated on the latter in the effort to identify terrestrial routes and networks. The information from these criminal records is complemented by data drawn from royal treasury account books.³²

Six chapters follow. The next one is an overview of the commercial systems in which the Province of Venezuela participated. These were the intercolonial trade with New Spain, the intercolonial trade with Spain's island colonies in the Caribbean, the legal transatlantic trade with Spain and the Canary Islands, and the extra-legal trade with foreigners. This last included a transatlantic route between the United Provinces and Venezuela, exchange with the French islands of the Caribbean, and most importantly, the exchange with the Dutch island of Curaçao. The chapter describes the general characteristics of this trade, including routes, goods exchanged, main sites, and temporal patterns. It ranks the importance of this trade as compared with the province's various legal overseas exchanges by combining other scholars' work on Curaçaoan trade records with an analysis of smuggling-related royal treasury records from Caracas. Trade with the Dutch represented at least one third, and normally more, of the province's annual overseas trade. The aim of this chapter is to provide the broad context in which to understand the four case studies that follow.

The third chapter concentrates on Caracas, the provincial capital and Venezuela's principal site for storage, exchange, and consumption of imported goods. The provincial governors enjoyed special relationships with the wholesale merchants and retail shop owners of Caracas. They tended to enter into opaque yet lucrative deals with the former

³² See the "Bibliographical Essay" in the bibliography for further discussion of the archival sources consulted for this study.

and prey upon the latter. The chapter focuses on the governorship of Marcos de Betancourt (1716-1720), who initiated a major transition in the governor's approach to the suppression of extra-legal commerce. Betancourt combined the governor's heavy influence over trade in the city of Caracas with an integrated enforcement policy for the provincial interior. Both pushed legal and illegal commercial activity towards the trading networks closely associated with the governor and his subordinates. The efforts of future governors and Guipuzcoa Company officials in the following decades institutionalized the strategy pioneered by Betancourt. Repressive efforts against smuggling expanded in the provincial interior. In Caracas, while the formal and informal taxing of shop owners continued, the administration of criminal cases involving smuggling expanded and fostered multiple service industries.

The fourth chapter, on the jurisdiction of Valencia, explores one of the unintended consequences of the Guipuzcoa Company's efforts to counter smuggling. The company managed to exert control over Puerto Cabello, which had been an important smuggling port for cacao before the company arrived in 1730, as well as the port's cacao-producing hinterland. Official control over the port also extended inland along the royally sanctioned route that connected the district's interior valleys and the coast. Nevertheless, this sphere of effective vigilance did not extend to all of Valencia's coastal valleys. Nor could it stifle Valencia's important tobacco trade. In fact, one consequence of the company's focus on cacao was the increase in tobacco exports from Venezuela to Curaçao. Smugglers and their backers from Valencia's interior valleys avoided the royal road that joined Valencia and Puerto Cabello and concentrated their energies on alternative routes to the sea. The most important of these joined the city of Valencia and

the coast by way of the interior settlement of Yagua and the proscribed trails to the coastal valleys of Patanemo and Turiamo. Valencia's two leading smuggling operations, centered around the municipal council leadership and the justice of the peace, respectively, fought to control as many points as possible along this route. The group that controlled this route controlled the district's informal tobacco trade. The chapter concludes with the analysis of the fallout from a frustrated attempt to join the two groups. The marriage of the justice of the peace to a prominent cabildo member's daughter would have fused the rival networks, but when the plans failed, the two sides threw themselves into dismantling the other's smuggling operations.

The fifth chapter presents the district of Nirgua. Of the four regions examined, Nirgua was the one in which extra-legal transportation and trade played the largest role in the local economy. Squeezed between densely populated and productive Valencia to the east and the expanding cacao frontier of San Felipe to the west, Nirgua stood at a crossroads for provincial transportation and communication but was for a long time an interior frontier. The area was settled in the seventeenth century by free coloreds, or *pardos*, who secured political privileges from the governor in return for their successful conquest of the area. By the eighteenth century outsiders, especially colonial officials in Caracas, developed mistrust for *nirgüeños* based on the district's political autonomy, pardo demographic majority, and the prevalence of smuggling along the jurisdiction's coast. Nirgua's residents were seen as insubordinate, even disloyal; they were said to have monopolized extra-legal trade in the area. Nirgua's pardo political elite and their clients did indeed engage in smuggling, but in truth, no one controlled smuggling in Nirgua. It retained its open, frontier nature, and various groups took advantage of this to

engage in extra-legal trade. The chapter identifies two networks that exercised unequal influence over two distinct spheres. First, the municipal elite controlled the movement of goods north and south across the district. Second, the justices of the peace and heads of coastal patrols, with the backing of military commanders and Guipuzcoa Company officials in nearby Puerto Cabello and San Felipe, dominated movement east and west along the coast. The two overlapped and clashed at the Punta Morón, Nirgua's primary point of contact with Dutch traders from Curaçao.

The fourth and final case is San Felipe, which marked the western edge of the cacao frontier. The chapter examines the area's two leading commercial networks in the first half of the eighteenth century. First, the Capuchin missionaries used their coastal missions in the San Felipe district as a strategic and secure site in their commercial undertakings, which extended from the llanos to Curaçao. The chapter follows two processes over the first fifty years of the eighteenth century: the Capuchins' founding of cacao estates on the San Felipe frontier and their integration into the order's wider system; and the efforts made by civil authorities and local landowners to wrest from the Capuchins the mission lands, labor, and cacao groves through the secularization of Indian settlements under mission control.

The second network centered on the city's first justice of the peace, Juan Angel de Larrea, a Basque immigrant who settled in the area early in the eighteenth century and integrated himself into the frontier society. Concentrating his efforts on the Yaracuy River valley, De Larrea consolidated tight control over legal and extra-legal trade in San Felipe from the city's founding in 1730 to his death in 1739. He secured his power by serving as intermediary for the various groups and institutions that competed to control

San Felipe's cacao economy, managing to balance San Felipe's tradition of trading cacao with the Dutch with the Guipuzcoa Company's mandate to stop it. When he died, the delicate balance of interests crumbled and the various elements struggled to gain an upper hand in San Felipe's lucrative legal and extra-legal cacao trade.

The seventh and final chapter draws together the four cases, compares and contrasts the social and spatial patterns of smuggling in each, and reaches general conclusions about the conditions that fostered or limited the development of successful smuggling operations in Venezuela in the period under consideration as well as the significance of informality in colonial society. It also contemplates the cultural implications of widespread and regular transgression of the colonial legal order.

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF VENEZUELA'S COMMERCIAL CONNECTIONS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The geographical location of the Caribbean colonies made it virtually impossible to impose a ban on cross-colonial and international trade. In addition, the frequent wars between the European metropolises allowed the Caribbean planter communities to shift allegiances or to threaten to do so. The Iberian colonies did not have similar opportunities for integrating themselves in the Atlantic world of international trade and production, except for some coastal regions.

—Pieter Emmer¹

Yo la dejé descalza y la encontré calzada.

—Luis Vargas²

Introduction: The Expansion of the Dutch Seaborne Empire into the Caribbean

Wars, as Tilly points out, make states, and states make wars. As Gallant adds, states, bandits, and capitalism exert mutual constructive influence.³ And as many students of colonial Latin America and the Caribbean would quickly notice, these same forces combined to make Europe's New World colonies in the early modern period. The important role of the *conquistadores*, the Spanish military entrepreneurs of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, should be painfully obvious, as should the interplay between their consolidation of political power in the New World and the Spanish imperial state's efforts to contain, coopt, or remove them.⁴ In the Caribbean

¹ Emmer, "The Dutch in the Making of the Second Atlantic System," pp. 16-17.

² Luis Vargas, "La traicionera," from his album, *La maravilla*, José Luis Records, CDJLR 112. In English: "I left her barefoot and found her shod."

³ Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime;" Gallant, "Brigandage, Piracy, Capitalism, and State Formation."

⁴ The central role of frontiers should also be evident. For the connections between extra-legal violence, military entrepreneurs, the expansion of state influence, the efforts to consolidate hegemony, and material

professional scholars' concession of piracy history to enthusiasts has obscured the significance of the earliest phases of European challenges to Spanish territorial dominance in the region. The pirates' successors, the private monopoly trade companies, have fared better, although much work remains to be done to integrate these important phases and institutions of state building into a larger narrative of European colonial expansion and contraction in the Caribbean.⁵

From 1568 to 1648 war between the Hapsburg Crown and its subjects in the northern Low Countries helped make the United Provinces, and Amsterdam in particular, into the fulcrum of European merchant capitalism in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The war brought together political and commercial forces in the north; the concentration of the military conflict in the Netherlands' southern regions produced significant dislocations. One of these was the transfer of human and financial resources from Antwerp to Amsterdam, a transfer of the locus of financial power in the region.⁶ War also helped push the United Provinces' colonizing efforts in the East and West Indies. Philip II's inheritance of the Portuguese crown brought together under Hapsburg

and conceptual frontiers, see Gallant, "Brigandage, Piracy, Capitalism, and State Formation;" Silvio R. Duncan Barreta and John Markoff, "Civilization and Barbarism: Cattle Frontiers in Latin America," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20:4 (1978), pp. 587-620; and Anton Blok, "Infamous Occupations," in his *Honour and Violence*, pp. 44-68.

⁵ Gallant's essay provides a broad historical, theoretical framework that may guide such an integration. See also Janice E. Thomson's *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). For the Caribbean context, see Anne Pérotin-Dumon, "The Pirate and the Emperor: Power and the Law on the Seas, 1450-1850," in J.D. Tracy, ed., *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 196-227; Nuala Zahedieh, "The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655-1692," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 43:4 (October 1986), pp. 570-593; and idem "Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in Early English Jamaica, 1655-1689," *Economic History Review*, Second Series 39:2 (1986), pp. 205-222.

⁶ Ralph Davis succinctly describes this and other elements that contributed to Amsterdam's prominence in the chapter entitled "The Rise of the Dutch Commercial Empire" in his *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), pp. 176-193.

dominion all of Iberia's overseas possessions, which produced serious repercussions for the Low Countries. Dutch expansion into the East Indies took on a new imperial meaning, as wresting factories from their Portuguese occupants became part of the war effort against Hapsburg authority in the Netherlands. The integration of the two crowns complicated Dutch access to the salt flats of Setúbal, Portugal, long one of the most important sources for the Dutch salting industry. Their search for new and more stable sources took them first down the west coast of Africa to the Cape Verde Islands and then across the Atlantic to the Caribbean, where Dutch ships arrived in the 1590s.

In Venezuela they found the deep salt pans of the Araya Peninsula, which they exploited off and on for the first two decades of the seventeenth century. Spanish efforts to expel Dutch traders and ward off Dutch ships from eastern Venezuela were by the 1630s successful, in that they managed to push the interlopers away from Araya, but with the consequence that the Dutch expanded their search for salt sources to other parts of the Caribbean, leading to the capture and occupation of St. Martin and Curaçao in 1631 and 1634, respectively.⁷

The Dutch quest for salt in the New World and their subsequent colonization of Caribbean islands articulated the region directly with the Dutch finishing industries and commodity distribution networks which, combined with the fiscal resources and institutions concentrated in Amsterdam, formed the foundation of Dutch financial and commercial dominance in the seventeenth century. The United Provinces' New World expansion—in North America, in the Caribbean, and in Brazil—corresponded with the

⁷ For summaries of the Dutch-Spanish salt conflicts and Dutch expansion into the Caribbean on its trail, see Engel Sluiter, "Dutch-Spanish Rivalry in the Caribbean Area, 1594-1609," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 28 (1948), pp. 165-196; and the chapter entitled "The Battle For Salt" in Goslinga's *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast*, pp. 116-140.

seizure of the East Indian spice trade from the Portuguese and more generally, with the monumental shift in hegemony over European merchant capitalism from the Mediterranean to northwestern Europe—specifically from the city-states of northern Italy to the Low Countries, with Amsterdam at the center.

The northern Low Countries in the seventeenth century enjoyed unrivaled advantage in long-distance trade, industrial processes, storage, and finance. The Dutch first superseded the Hanseatic League in the delivery of goods around the Baltic Sea. They eventually monopolized the distribution of salted cod and herring throughout northern and central Europe and became Western Europe's main suppliers of grains and northern timber and its by-products. The Dutch also enjoyed a distinct advantage in the quality and quantity of their long-distance commercial cargo ships. In the East Indies they superseded the Portuguese, securing through the Dutch East India Company (hereinafter VOC), chartered in 1602, monopoly over the purchase of precious spices in Asia and their distribution in Western Europe.

Amsterdam served as the nerve center for the Baltic, East Indian, and New World trades, as well as for Dutch financial and industrial activities. The city hosted the great finishing and food processing factories of the era: here textiles from England were finished, dyewoods from New Granada were processed, sugar from Brazil and the Caribbean was refined, tobacco from the Chesapeake, Venezuela, and the eastern Low Countries was dried, cut, and spun, and cacao from Venezuela was made into chocolate. All of these commodities, plus the primary goods from northern Europe, the spices from East Asia, and silver from the New World were stored and marketed in Amsterdam for eventual distribution throughout the Netherlands and the rest of Europe. The city's

financial system bolstered its commercial and industrial activities. The key elements of the Dutch merchant empire concentrated in the city: the merchant marine, banking, Europe's first stock exchange, and the principal financial investors in both the VOC and the Dutch West India Company (hereinafter WIC). The size and stability of the city's commodities market and the strength of its financial system instilled confidence inside and out of the Netherlands in Dutch commercial enterprises. This helped build the popularity and utility of letters of credit, long-term commitments on the part of commodity buyers and sellers to the safe delivery of goods from the Spice Islands, the Caribbean, or Norway to the Amsterdam market and their eventual exchange.

By the mid seventeenth century Amsterdam had become western Europe's leading entrepôt and financial center, and the Dutch were the prime long-distance carriers for both European and tropical commodities. Early expansion in the New World placed greater emphasis on the military side of colonization, as official policy called for the capture of Portuguese and Spanish colonial territories. This contentious approach to commercial expansion characterized Dutch interactions with Iberian powers in the New World for the half century between the first and second foundings of the Dutch WIC. It produced mixed results. The company, first chartered in 1621 at the end of the Twelve Years Truce, was modeled on its East Indian counterpart: like the VOC, it enjoyed commercial, military, judicial, administrative, and diplomatic powers, although with a greater emphasis on war making on the Atlantic coast of Africa and throughout the New World.⁸ The Dutch briefly occupied Bahia from 1624 to 1625 and later, in 1630, established control over Pernambuco, which they held until 1654. The company

⁸ Another similarity with the VOC was that the majority of the company's board members were from Amsterdam, as was the largest share of its stockholders. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire*, p. 53.

successfully forced its way into the African slave trade, taking Elmina in 1638.

Territorial expansion in the Caribbean was done under the WIC: St. Martin in 1631, Curaçao in 1634, Aruba, Bonaire, and St. Eustatius in 1636, and Saba in 1640. While the company was able to show some successes—the sugar industry in Pernambuco during the years of Dutch occupation and Piet Heyn's awesome capture of the entire Mexican silver fleet in Havana in 1628—investors for the most part were dissatisfied with the company's performance.

The 1648 Treaty of Münster signaled a change.⁹ Two years earlier, in a move that helped clear the way for the peace treaty, the directors of the WIC made clear their willingness to support a peace with Spain and their disposition to shift the company's guiding strategy from violent confrontation with the Hapsburgs to peaceful commercial interactions with their American colonies. The company abandoned expansionary projects and settled into exploiting what gains they had made. The Dutch slave trade in the second half of the seventeenth century indicated the path that Dutch trading activity in the New World would take for the next one-hundred years. The loss of Pernambuco helped the WIC concentrate its activities in the New World on the Caribbean. After 1654 the WIC made no further attempt to seize New World colonies from the Portuguese or Spain. The human and material resources and commercial structures that had gone towards the sugar industry in Pernambuco, including the African slaves the company transported, had to be dedicated to other enterprises. The Dutch found this opportunity in the Caribbean, where they contributed to the development of the sugar industry in the English and French colonies through their expertise in milling and sugar boiling

⁹ Israel, *Dutch Primacy*, p. 170.

techniques, through their investments, through the African slave trade first to the English and French colonies and later to the Spanish mainland, and through their disposition to transport people, materials, and tropical commodities between their various origins and destinations in Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe. The transit trade proved most profitable of all these economic activities, and this would be the case for their own possessions in the area as well.

The English and French metropolitan governments recognized the vital part Dutch merchants, bankers, and sailors played in consolidating slave-based sugar production on their respective island colonies, and they ungraciously responded by putting up restrictive mercantilist controls on these colonies' external trade. The changes initiated by Cromwell and Colbert did not completely expel Dutch traders from the British and French Caribbean, but they did succeed in moving the bulk of the islands' trade, especially transatlantic shipping, to their respective nationals. This exclusion gave Dutch investors in Amsterdam and merchants, governors, and sea captains in Curaçao added incentive to concentrate on the ample Venezuelan coast.

European demand for New World agricultural commodities like sugar, tobacco, and cacao pushed this symbiosis between Curaçao and Venezuela.¹⁰ Demand for these products, steadily increasing over the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, grew at an unprecedented rate between 1720 and 1750.¹¹ The Dutch island and the Venezuela mainland colony were well positioned to take advantage of this, and agricultural production and trade expanded during this period. The rising European

¹⁰ The term is borrowed from Klooster. Chapter VII of his *Illicit Riches*, pp. 121-139, is entitled "The Symbiosis of Curaçao and Venezuela."

¹¹ Israel, *Dutch Primacy*, pp. 393-395; Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, p. 307.

demand was no secret, nor was the wealth being generated by Venezuela's export of cacao and other products to Curaçao and New Spain. The Bourbon monarchs, after the War of Spanish Succession, sought to assert effectively the mercantilist claims and policies the Hapsburgs had put into place centuries before, in an attempt to reorient the rising economies of peripheral colonies like Venezuela and the River Plate back towards Spain.

Venezuela's trade with the Dutch island colony of Curaçao was one of various commercial circuits that joined the province with the rest of the Americas and the Atlantic World in the eighteenth century. The following discussion briefly summarizes these intercolonial and international systems of exchange, describes the general characteristics of the informal trade with Curaçao, and attempts to identify the articulation of this trade with the internal circulation of commodities and people within the province of Venezuela in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Legal Trade with Spain and the Canary Islands

Dutch traders from the United Provinces and from Curaçao cruised the Caracas coast and Venezuelans gathered on beaches and clandestine ports to meet them in open disregard for long-standing mercantilist control imposed by the Spanish Crown on the Province of Venezuela. Spanish mercantilism in the New World developed under very different circumstances from that of later colonial powers. The English and the French assembled their Caribbean commercial regimes as a means of excluding the Dutch traders who had carried the bulk of English and French colonial possessions' local and transatlantic trade from these colonies' founding to the late seventeenth century.¹² The

¹² Emmer, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy*, pp. 1-32.

Spanish system, in contrast, emerged more in response to commercial and monopoly concerns within Spain than to competition from foreigners or other European powers. The trade monopoly imposed upon Spain's New World territories consolidated over the course of the sixteenth century as a means of guaranteeing Seville's privileged access to American markets. Seville's favored position remained secure throughout the seventeenth century, yet by the early eighteenth century the Spanish Crown, seeking to take greater commercial advantage of its American colonies, had begun to see Seville's advantage as a handicap, especially when it came to the rapidly expanding export economies of peripheral colonies like Venezuela and the River Plate. For the Indies in general, an important early change came in 1717 when Cádiz replaced Seville as the seat of the House of Trade—a serious blow to the latter city's powerful merchant guild. For the Province of Venezuela in particular, a major shift in imperial commercial policy came when the Crown granted partial monopoly trade privileges to the RCG in 1728.

Before 1730, the year the RCG's first ships arrived at La Guaira, Venezuela's Crown-sanctioned transatlantic trade had been limited to irregular visits by register ships, most often from the Canary Islands. Venezuela, like the rest of the Audiencia de Santo Domingo, suffered the consequences of an imperial trading system geared towards the extraction of precious metals from the mines of New Spain and Upper Peru. Santo Domingo and the Caribbean districts under its authority were expected to defend the Indies' porous northeastern border without receiving much in return. The south-bound squadron of Spain's Atlantic convoy fleet, the galleons, sailed to Cartagena de las Indias and their final destination of Panama without stopping in Venezuela. Register ships that had made prior arrangements with the House of Trade veered off the galleons' course to

visit Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, the eastern end of Cuba, and the mainland provinces of New Andalusia and Venezuela. These visits, however, were irregular, and residents of Venezuela learned to take advantage of their rare visits but not to count on them as regular trading partners.¹³

Nonetheless, the irregular sanctioned trade with Spain presented colonial officials and provincial merchants opportunities for enrichment. Various forms of tax evasion prevailed, although occasionally register ships transported prohibited goods. Register ships came infrequently, but when they did La Guaira and Caracas were glutted with imports. Merchants based in Seville, Cádiz, or the Canary Islands controlled most of the trade, and their representatives in the province, invariably family members, made sure transactions in Venezuela went smoothly. Furtive accounting, loading, and logging of ships' cargoes were especially acute in the Canary Islands, where the legal trade with northern European suppliers made their home country's finished products widely available for west-bound vessels. Register ships bound for Venezuela were required to anchor and unload only at La Guaira, but trade officials in Spain and Venezuela could do little to stop their captains from making unauthorized stops on the way west to Venezuela or on their return east to the Canary Islands. Register ships pulled in at Cumaná and Barcelona in New Andalusia and made alleged forced landings in the French colonies of the Lesser Antilles as well as Curaçao. After trading at La Guaira register ships would make an outbound stop at Curaçao or perhaps St. Eustatius before catching the Gulf Stream back to the eastern Atlantic. In the fifty years before the Crown's granting of

¹³ And, it should be noted, the register ships, like the *flotas* and *galeones* that sailed for Veracruz and Portobelo, were normally stocked with the same goods offered by the Dutch merchant marine sailing out of Curaçao, since so much of the House of Trade's business with America involved the distribution of manufactured goods and textiles imported into Castile from England, France, and the Netherlands.

monopoly trade privileges to the RCG, close ties developed between the wholesale merchants of the Canary Islands, their representatives in Venezuela, and the provincial governors, most of who were from the Canary Islands. The founding of the RCG had wide repercussions beyond the joint-stock company's commercial competition with the register ships for the Venezuelan market. It also produced clashes with established Canary Islander and Venezuelan interests, as Basque governors appointed to secure the company's position in the colony replaced Canary Islander governors, and as Basque immigrants poured into the colony to participate in the company's commercial and military activities.

The RCG also clashed with the English South Seas Company, holder of the *asiento*, the monopoly contract to provide slaves to Spain's American colonies. The earliest *asientos* granted by the Spanish Crown to Portuguese slave traders also joined Venezuela and the rest of the Spanish Caribbean with the eastern Atlantic, as the *asentistas'* slave ships sailed directly from the West African coast to the West Indies. The waning of Portuguese power in the Atlantic slave trade received formal recognition late in the seventeenth century, when in 1685 the Spanish Crown granted to the Dutch Coymans company *asiento* privileges for four years. By this time, the transport of African slaves to Venezuela had become part of the Caribbean transit trade, since the Dutch WIC had made Curaçao into the region's slave entrepôt. Curaçao continued to play this role after the Coymans *asiento* ended and even in the years after the War of Spanish Succession, when the French Guinea Company was granted the *asiento*. The South Seas Company replaced the French outfit at the end of the war and continued the practice. The company had a permanent factor in Caracas, who in turn had representatives in the province's other

major ports. The asiento, like the legal trade with Cádiz and the Canary Islands, served as a cover for exchanges not stipulated in the contract, either slaves or goods that were, at least under the terms of the asiento, foreign to the contracting company's purpose. The Crown revoked the South Seas Company's contract in 1738.

Legal Trade with New Spain

The vicissitudes of the legal trade with Spain and the Canary Islands were offset partially by the significant exchange between the province and the Viceroyalty of New Spain. From the mid seventeenth century on into the eighteenth century, Venezuela enjoyed a legally protected American market for its exports.¹⁴ Cacao was the province's main export in this exchange. Venezuela received in return silver, specie and bullion, as well as flour, ceramics, and textiles from Puebla and from the Philippines, including both legal and illegal silks from China. This trade was monopolized by the *mantuanos*—the landed and political elite of Caracas—who were guaranteed two-thirds of the cargo space on the ships that plied the Veracruz-La Guaira circuit. This privilege, staunchly defended by the Caracas cabildo, remained during the Guipuzcoa Company's commercial monopoly. Hence most of the cacao sent to Veracruz came from mantuano cacao estates from in and around Caracas. The luxury imports from Mexico went to satisfying mantuano demands: wheat flour for making bread, ceramics for dining and display, silks for clothing, and the little money that entered the province for their transactions.

¹⁴ Eduardo Arcila Fariás' *Comercio entre Venezuela y México en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Mexico: Colegio de México, 1950) is still the best source on this, although one must be careful, since he emphasizes the significance of the Mexican trade for colonial Venezuela's economy to the exclusion of the informal trade with Curaçao. See also his *Economía colonial de Venezuela* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1946). For an assessment, see Ramón Aizpurua, "La historiografía colonial venezolana contemporánea: De la tradicional a la reciente," in his *Temas de la historia colonial*, pp. 144-156, especially p. 146.

The Guipuzcoa Company was established to provide an alternative, attractive buyer for Venezuelan agricultural producers and to attack foreign trade along the Caracas coast. In practice it took dead aim at the Veracruz trade. In fact it hit the Veracruz trade harder than the Dutch trade through Curaçao. Granted, the Curaçao-Caracas coastal trade was negatively affected by the RCG's presence and activities along the coast, especially in its first 10 years of operation in Venezuela, but it readjusted during these difficult years. The Veracruz trade, in contrast, never fully recovered the share of Venezuela's cacao trade it lost to the Basque company.¹⁵

Caribbean Circuits: Audiencia de Santo Domingo, French Islands, and Curaçao

Venezuela also traded with the other colonies within the Audiencia de Santo Domingo and with its neighbor, New Granada. This Caribbean trade was permitted under Crown law, although the details of what could and could not be traded within the audiencia were never clear.¹⁶ This exchange with Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo was probably more important for the western ports of Maracaibo and Coro than for those of the central coast, but nevertheless, a substantial trade in cacao, hides, and other provisions in exchange for European perishable and finished goods and locally produced foodstuffs joined La Guaira with the other major ports of the Spanish Caribbean.¹⁷

¹⁵ Klooster, *Illicit Riches*; and Ramón Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas: Introducción al estudio del contrabando de la Provincia de Venezuela en tiempos de la Compañía Guipuzcoana, 1730-1780* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1993).

¹⁶ Aizpurua, "Comercio exterior," in his *Temas de historia colonial*, p. 39.

¹⁷ For a general discussion of port cities in the Caribbean in the eighteenth century, see the contributions to Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

Circuits of transportation and exchange also joined the Province of Venezuela with the neighboring provincias and gobernaciones to the east, west, and south. Tobacco from Barinas, which was part of the Viceroyalty of New Granada in the early eighteenth century, was supposed to exit the colonies by Maracaibo. Much of the weed moved illegally north and east, exported to European consumers through the province of Venezuela or down the Orinoco River. Trujillo, in the Venezuelan Andes, traded more with Maracaibo to the west than Caracas and its province to the east.¹⁸

Venezuela's products also crossed over to neighboring colonies illegally. Much of the cacao from Caracas' eastern cacao frontier—Barlovento—made its way further east into the province of New Andalusia, usually to the port of Barcelona but sometimes as far as Cumaná. From these points it was exported to the Lesser Antilles. Venezuelan cacao was also consumed locally in neighboring provinces and captaincies. Early in the eighteenth century British colonial subjects from Jamaica, Barbados, and the North American colonies engaged in sporadic trade along the Venezuelan coast. At the end of the century, the British presence in the Lesser Antilles, particularly on the island of Trinidad, drew considerable exports from Venezuela as well as other Spanish colonies of Tierra Firme and the Orinoco basin. The rapidly expanding sugar industry on the island created demands for hides used in furniture and storage, and mules to power the sugar mills and haul goods and materials.

Merchant ships also plied the routes between La Guaira and French colonies of Saint-Domingue, Guadeloupe, and especially Martinique. The trade came in and out of

¹⁸ Maracaibo was separated from the province of Venezuela in 1676. For tobacco production and trade, see Eduardo Arcila Fariás' *Historia de un monopolio: El Estanco de Tabaco en Venezuela (1779-1833)* (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1977).

the law depending on the comings and goings of war in Europe. Colonial authorities allowed trips to places like Martinique in times of grave necessity—when regular supplies of what were considered fundamental foodstuffs, like wheat flour, were threatened or depleted. France's island colonies were required by law to import only Bordeaux flour, but the high price of the French product, the comparatively low cost of North American products, and the regular presence of ships and traders from British North America meant that Martinique had in stock flour from Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia.¹⁹ These licensed flour runs sailed out of La Guaira and often returned with much more than flour. A typical ruse was to bring more flour than the amount stipulated in the license granted by colonial authorities. Also, some captain and merchants tried their luck bringing goods from Martinique into the province by way of La Guaira by showing up with a ship full of flour and other goods, forcing the hand of the military commander at the port. It is probable that others left La Guaira with permission to acquire flour at Martinique but with no intention of doing so. They would have sailed for Jamaica, which was throughout the eighteenth century the main flour supplier for Cartagena de las Indias.²⁰

¹⁹ These three cities led North America's flour export trade in the eighteenth century. The French island colonies were not, in fact their main destination in the Caribbean. More important in the first half of the eighteenth century were the Dutch colony of St. Eustatius and the English ports of Bridgetown and Kingston. It is likely that the Venezuelan ship captains and supercargoes made unapproved and unrecorded stops at these ports, where they would have purchased wheat flour as well. See Geoffrey N. Gilbert, "Baltimore's Flour Trade to the Caribbean, 1750-1815" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1975), especially pp. 2-3, 5, 12, 23. See also Linda Salvucci, "Supply, Demand, and the Making of a Market: Philadelphia and Havana at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century," in Knight and Liss, *Atlantic Port Cities*, pp. 40-57.

²⁰ Lance Grahn, *The Political Economy of Smuggling: Regional Informal Economies in Early Bourbon New Granada* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), pp. 176-180. See also Richard Pares, *Yankees and Creoles: The Trade Between North American and the West Indies Before the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 84.

Martinique and Jamaica were not Venezuela's sole emergency sources of flour as Curaçao also served at time as a legal supplier. This happened during times of war in Europe when Spain and the Netherlands did not find themselves on opposing sides: the War of Jenkins' Ear and the Seven Years War are two examples. Under these circumstances, colonial authorities again gave official sanction to excursions to Curaçao in times of dire need. The North American ports of Baltimore, New York, and Philadelphia were again main providers either through direct trade at Willemstad or through reexports brought to Curaçao by Dutch traders returning from their Caribbean circuits.²¹

The trade with French Martinique never became regular. The flour runs were punctuated and were not frequent or significant enough to prompt a major reorientation of Venezuela's export trade. Likewise, the trade with England's colonial possession in the West Indies cannot be called regular or substantial for the years before that country's colonial expansion into the southeastern Caribbean and the Wild Coast. Control over Trinidad in 1797 gave Britain a regular entrepôt and strategic base for expansion that paralleled Curaçao's function for much of the eighteenth century. Trinidad became a center for contraband imports and exports to and from Venezuela, with cacao, mules, hides, and coffee going to the island and the usual foods and finished goods arriving in Margarita, Cumaná, Barcelona, or at the mouth of the Orinoco.²²

Venezuela's most important Caribbean trading partner in the eighteenth century was the Dutch island colony of Curaçao. The Dutch took the island from the handful of

²¹ Gilbert, "Baltimore's Flour Trade," pp. 12, 23.

²² Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*; and idem, "Las mulas venezolanas y el Caribe oriental del siglo XVIII," *Tierra Firme* 26 (1989), pp. 125-139.

Spanish vecinos and their encomienda Indians in 1634. In 1648 Spain recognized Dutch sovereignty over it but did not acknowledge the United Provinces' other Caribbean possessions. Over the course of its first fifty years as a Dutch colony, Curaçao moved from being an outpost for hounding Spanish transatlantic shipping to the Caribbean's biggest emporium.²³ Curaçao's commitment to this role can be traced to 1674, the year the Dutch WIC was refounded with trade in the Caribbean its guiding principle. The year marks the beginning of a one-hundred year period in which the company, the island's colonial administration, and the island's populace dedicated themselves fully to making Curaçao the warehouse of the Caribbean. Known as a little Amsterdam at the southern edge of the Caribbean Sea, the island served as a trade center for the entire Caribbean as well as for important transactions with Britain's North American colonies.²⁴ Venezuela, nonetheless, was Curaçao's closest trading partner.²⁵

Curaçao was the Caribbean center for two maritime trading systems that joined the United Provinces, the Dutch colonies of the New World, and their various trading partners in the Caribbean. The *grote vaart*, or large navigation, was the transatlantic system that connected Amsterdam, and to a lesser extent other Dutch cities like Middleburg, with Willemstad, Curaçao's port and administrative center. The *kleine*

²³ The English colony of Jamaica would eventually rival Curaçao, although over time the two islands consolidated distinct spheres of extra-legal trade with Spanish America: Jamaica dominated smuggling in the Gulf of Mexico and the western Caribbean from the Yucatan Peninsula to New Granada, and Curaçao enjoyed privileged access to Venezuela and the eastern Caribbean.

²⁴ Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 59-71; Emmer, "'Jesus Christ was Good but Trade Was Better': An Overview of the Transit Trade of the Dutch Antilles," in his *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy*, pp. 91-109. This was first published under the same title in Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman, eds., *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida), pp. 206-222. See also Israel, *Dutch Primacy*, pp. 165-166, 240-241, 243-244.

²⁵ Ramón Aizpurua, "El comercio holandés en el Caribe a través de Curazao, 1700-1756: Datos para su estudio," in his *Temas de historia colonial*, pp. 126-143.

vaart, or small navigation, described the various lines of trade that joined Curaçao with the rest of the Caribbean and the British colonies to the north. A quick consideration of the *groote vaart* reveals what Curaçao sent back to the Netherlands and how much of it came from Venezuela. A comparison of the *groote vaart* figures with Venezuela's legal export totals gives an indication, however cursory, of Curaçao, New Spain, and Spain's share of the Venezuelan export economy. A review of the *kleine vaart* provides a picture of the rhythms, patterns, and details of Curaçaoan trade along the Caracas coast.²⁶

The port records from Willemstad report 705 embarkations bound from Curaçao to the Netherlands between 1700 and 1756.²⁷ On average, 12 ships made the trip each year. The slowest year was 1732, when 2 embarkations were recorded; the most active year was 1748, with 28. The low point in the *groote vaart* corresponded roughly with the Guipuzcoa Company's first decade in Venezuela: from 1732 to 1741, when only 80 ships made the voyage, which averages to 8 exits per year. The company ships transported a variety of Caribbean agricultural products, but the five leading commodities, in terms of both volume and value, were cacao, tobacco, hides, dyewoods, and sugar. The sugar came from the French colonies of the Caribbean, especially Saint Domingue, which accounted for 68% of the total sugar exports for the years 1726 to 1755.²⁸ Martinique and Guadeloupe supplied most of the rest. Dutch traders purchased most of the dyewood they sent to Amsterdam along the Spanish Main, in a stretch that included Venezuela's

²⁶ *Kleine vaart* and *groote vaart* from Cornelis Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and the Guianas*. Aizpurua also uses the terms in his summary of commerce in eighteenth-century Curaçao, "El comercio holandés en el Caribe."

²⁷ For the following discussion, I rely heavily on Aizpurua's "El comercio holandés en el Caribe." Aizpurua presents data culled from the West Indies Company's records of port movement into and out of Willemstad.

²⁸ This calculation is based on Appendix 10 in Klooster's *Illicit Riches*, p. 235.

western coast from Tucacas west and New Granada's eastern shores, fundamentally Riohacha and Santa Marta. According to Aizpurua, Riohacha supplied the most, followed by Santa Marta, Campeche, Coro, and occasionally, Pernambuco and Bahia in Brazil.²⁹

Curaçao's top three tropical exports—cacao, tobacco, and hides—came mainly from Venezuela. While the Dutch competed over the cacao trade with Spain and New Spain, Curaçaoan merchants were the exclusive buyers of Venezuelan hides and tobacco for most of the eighteenth century.³⁰ Ships returning from Santo Domingo and Cuba brought hides with them, but not nearly as many as those that cruised the Caracas coast, picking up *cueros de Caracas*.³¹ Most Venezuelan tobacco reached European markets by way of Curaçao although the Spanish colony was not Amsterdam's most important supplier. The Chesapeake led American regions in supplying Amsterdam with tobacco, followed by Puerto Rico and Cuba. Venezuelan tobacco did sell for more on the Amsterdam market, as the varieties of spun and unprocessed tobacco, chiefly the spun Barinas variety, were oriented to Dutch and European luxury markets. Venezuelan tobacco was marketed in at least six different prices categories: Maracaibo, Barinas,

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 194-196 and Appendix 12, pp. 238-239; Aizpurua, "Comercio exterior;" idem, "El comercio holandés en el Caribe;" idem, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*; and Grahn, *The Political Economy of Smuggling*, pp. 31-97.

* ³⁰ Late in its monopoly, especially in the years 1769 and 1770, the RCG took interest in Venezuelan hides. For hides, see Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, p. 197, and Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, p. 329; for tobacco, see Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, p. 190. Tobacco became of increasing interest to Spain, as confirmed by the creation of the tobacco estanco in 1779. See Arcila Fariás, *Historia de un monopolio*.

³¹ I assume the trade with French St. Domingue drew most of the hides exported illegally from Spanish Santo Domingo. In the Cuban case, the legal trade through Havana attracted most of the cattle slaughter and byproducts industry. The Cuban sugar industry, once it began its mid-century expansion, would have also created a strong demand for the product.

Guanare, Araure, Nutrias, and Valencia.³² It is not clear, as Aizpurua and Klooster both lament, what portion of the Curaçaoan trade each variety represented, as the port records from Willemstad only specify Barinas tobacco. Other tobacco from Venezuela was generally labeled as such, without further indication of regional origin.³³

The informal export of Venezuelan hides and tobacco to Curaçao faced little legal competition from Spain or its American colonies until the Guipuzcoa Company made its first tentative attempts to redirect these commodities towards its storehouses. The contest over Venezuelan cacao, however, had been fierce from the beginning. From 1675, Dutch traders challenged what had been the exclusive domain of the La Guaira-Veracruz exchange, which was dominated on the Venezuelan end by the Caracas oligarchy.³⁴ New Spain's share of Venezuelan cacao exports declined during the half century between 1675 and the founding of the Guipuzcoa Company, though its share of total cacao exports never dropped below one-third. On average, another third of Venezuelan cacao exports went to Curaçao. Actually, the years before the Guipuzcoa Company's founding in Venezuela reflect an unwritten, unplanned, yet stable partition of the Venezuelan coast. The Veracruz trade prevailed in and around La Guaira and in the areas where the mantuanos enjoyed unchallenged power. The Curaçaoan trade dominated further down the coast to the west, roughly from Chuao and Choróni on the Caracas district's western

³² Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 189-190; Posthumus, *Inquiry into the History of the Prices*, Volume 1, pp. 199-207.

³³ Klooster on tobacco in his *Illicit Riches*, pp. 188-191; Aizpurua on tobacco in *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 314-317, 327-329; and idem, "El comercio holandés en el Caribe," pp. 134-135.

³⁴ See Aizpurua's Cuadro 15 in his *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 322-323.

fringe to Coro and the Paraguaná Peninsula on the border with New Granada.³⁵ After the War of Spanish Succession, the Dutch share expanded: from 1713 through 1720, Curaçao received an average of 52.5% of Venezuela's annual cacao exports.³⁶ Cacao had already become the island's primary export to Amsterdam by the end of the war, and it would remain so into the 1720s.³⁷

The Guipuzcoa Company's combined strategy of presenting a favorable trade option and suppressing coastal smuggling depressed both the Mexican and Curaçaoan trade in Venezuelan cacao. The 1730s represented the low point in the cacao trade to Curaçao, although the export of other commodities, namely tobacco and hides, increased by the end of this decade. Cacao recovered with the War of Jenkins' Ear, beginning in 1739, and returned to prominence among Curaçao's exports from the 1740s through the first years of the 1750s. From 1700 to 1756, Curaçao carried 674,000 fanegas of Venezuela's cacao.³⁸

Venezuelan historian Ramón Aizpurua identifies five major moments in the trade relations between Curaçao and Venezuela during the years 1700 to 1756.³⁹ The first, from 1700 to 1712, was characterized by instability and a limited role for Curaçao, due to the war in general and English corsair activity in particular. The second, from 1712 to

³⁵ The Dutch sphere eventually enveloped the mantuano one, as Curaçaoan trading ships, following the cacao frontier as it spread east into Barlovento, became regular visitors at the mouth of the Tuy River.

³⁶ Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 322-323.

³⁷ Aizpurua, Cuadro 3.2 in "El comercio holandés en el Caribe," p. 138.

³⁸ Aizpurua, "Comercio exterior," p. 35. Aizpurua breaks down the cacao trade during this period as follows: 943,000 fanegas to New Spain (37.2%); 618,000 fanegas to Spain with the Guipuzcoa Company (24.4%); 674,000 to Curaçao (26.6%); and 300,000 fanegas to others, such as the Canary Islands, ports in the Spanish Caribbean, or the French and English asentos (11.6%). The fanega as a measurement of weight varied according to the object weighed. One fanega of Caracas cacao was about 110 to 116 pounds.

³⁹ Aizpurua, "El comercio holandés en el Caribe," p. 128.

1732, saw increased stability in the relationship and a growing role for Curaçao. The third, from 1732 to 1744, was the low point in the trade—particularly the cacao trade—a crisis brought on by the Guipuzcoa Company. The fourth, from 1744 to 1751, was a period of “splendor,” as the War of Jenkins’ Ear and Juan Francisco de León’s rebellion,⁴⁰ and the subsequent reduction of the company’s privileges and activities, combined to regenerate the Dutch coastal trade. And the fifth, from 1751 to 1756, was characterized by a new drop in the Curaçao-Venezuela interchange, as the company effectively reestablished its authority in the province.

The *kleine vaart* joined Curaçao with North America, the Greater Antilles, the Windward and Leeward Islands, but the most important route was the trip to and from Venezuela.⁴¹ The exchange was in the hands of the Dutch ship captains, merchants, and their representatives who cruised the Venezuelan coast, although less frequently Venezuela planters, merchants, colonial officials, or their agents went directly to Curaçao to trade or make arrangements for future transactions. Dutch sloops sailed out from Willemstad throughout the year, with more traffic to and from Venezuela during the cacao harvest.⁴² They followed two main itineraries: first, an extended sojourn in

⁴⁰ Juan Francisco de León, a Canary Islander immigrant who had been justice of the peace of Panare (Caracas) until he was replaced by a Basque, in 1749 led an uprising of small landholders and other canarios against the RCG’s monopoly. See Francisco Morales Padrón, *Rebelión contra la Compañía de Caracas* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1955); Ronald Dennis Hussey, *The Caracas Company, 1728-1784: A Study in the History of Spanish Monopolistic Trade* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), pp. 122-155; Ferry, *The Colonial Elite of Caracas*.

⁴¹ The following discussion of the Curaçaoan *kleine vaart* with Venezuela draws heavily on Aizpurua’s “El comercio holandés en el Caribe.”

⁴² This occurred twice a year, in June and December, and the Dutch ships flocked to Venezuela’s coastal valleys and inlet in the months that followed. Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 64-75; Eugenio Piñero, *The Town of San Felipe and Colonial Cacao Economies* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1994), pp. 113-138; and Eduardo Arcila Farías et al., *La Obra Pía de Chuao, 1568-1825* (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1968).

Venezuela that included calls at various ports and lasted anywhere from two weeks to two months; second, shorter, direct trips to specific destinations closer to the Dutch islands, to the Coro coast or the Dutch enclave of Tucacas.⁴³ These normally took a few days to complete, although expeditions to Tucacas sometimes turned into extended stays there, depending on the business the Dutch trader had or, depending on the presence of Spanish corsairs, the safety of returning to sea.

The extended excursions to Venezuela took groups of Dutch ships to the colony's cacao-producing valleys and main points of coastal exchange. Sailing in groups of at least five, sometimes six ships, the Curaçaoan traders set out prepared to exchange textiles, liquors, foods, and other finished goods for Venezuelan agricultural products and raw materials. They also prepared for violent confrontation. They used the Dutch island of Bonaire, directly east of Curaçao, as both a storage facility for Dutch and Venezuelan products and as a stopover point between jaunts to Venezuelan inlets and ports. These stops were often made necessary by the high winds and rough seas that were common around Curaçao and the neighboring islands. While most departed Willemstad with some plan, no matter how imprecise, of the places they were to visit and the people with whom they expected to trade, some set sail from Curaçao with no set itinerary and with no established contacts in Venezuela. They gathered information on potential deals once they reached the mainland, and they adjusted their itinerary accordingly. The ships

⁴³ Early in the eighteenth century Curaçaoan merchants established an outpost at Tucacas, on the western edge of the Province of Venezuela, where they constructed warehouses, residences, and a synagogue. Colonial authorities in Caracas sent various excursions against the settlement, only to see it rebuilt and reoccupied after Spanish forces had withdrawn. Celestino Andrés Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe durante la primera mitad del siglo XVIII* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1984), pp. 65-66, 198-201; Aizpurua, *Curaçao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 193-194; Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 135-138, 145-148. See also the discussion below.

generally let the prevailing currents dictate their route, visiting the eastern most sites first and working their way west.⁴⁴ The coastline from Cape Codera to the cays off Tucacas defines this extended route.

The shorter journeys tended to link Willemstad with Coro and Tucacas. The trip to Coro sometimes took just a day; sometimes it was combined with a visit to Tucacas. Dyewoods, hides, and mules were the dominant exports. Slaves were often imported. Trips to Tucacas were done for various reasons. In the early decades of the eighteenth century, Dutch merchants and their agents maintained a successful, permanent outpost in the Spanish colony. According to historian Wim Klooster the settlement was founded by a group of Jews from Curaçao who fled the island in 1693 to escape an epidemic.⁴⁵ Spanish colonial authorities made repeated attempts to destroy the colony, only to see the Dutch return and refound it as soon as the Spanish presence had been removed and the threat of attack reduced. At its height, Tucacas had seventeen houses and a synagogue. The enclave often served as the final port of call for sloops and schooners that cruised the Venezuelan coastline. It was also an important rendezvous for Curaçaoans and Venezuelans involved in the informal trade. Here they met to arrange future encounters. Sometimes Venezuelans transported goods, usually cacao, tobacco, hides, and mules, directly to the outpost. Curaçaoans also used Tucacas as a base to make short journeys

⁴⁴ By the 1740s and 1750s, the eastward expansion of the Caracas cacao frontier into Barlovento helped make Higuerote, at the Tuy River delta, the first stop for many Curaçaoan trading vessels. Before then, Curaçaoan ships had tended to concentrate on the coast west of La Guaira, avoiding confrontations with the Spanish naval forces stationed there. Also, ships that participated in the *groote vaart* between the United Provinces and Curaçao often made stops along the Venezuelan coast, first in New Andalusia and then in the province itself, on their way to their final destination.

⁴⁵ Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, p. 135.

east and west, using it in the same manner as others used Bonaire. Once they had filled the holds of their ships, they returned to Curaçao.

The crews of the Curaçaoan ships consisted of a captain, sailors, and a merchant or his representative. Often the captain and the person in charge of commercial transactions were one and the same. Most of the captains lived on Curaçao and dedicated themselves to the *kleine vaart*, although it is not clear how many lived exclusively from the Venezuelan trade. A few captains who made the transatlantic route also stopped to trade in Venezuela. The dealers who sailed on the sloops and schooners also tended to be based in Curaçao. Often they represented the large import-export firms that had offices on the island and in the Netherlands. They were responsible for making prior commitments with Venezuelan sellers, negotiating deals, or recruiting Venezuelans to make the necessary arrangements to determine when and where to meet Venezuelan planters, merchants, officials, or their agents. The sailors were mostly free blacks and slaves from Willemstad, recruited by ship captains or merchants and hired out by their owners. According to Klooster, hirings tended to be done by the single journey, so when the ships returned to Willemstad the crews broke up, with each individual going his own way, seeking the next opportunity to cruise the Caracas coast.⁴⁶

Normally Dutch traders from Curaçao made the trip to Venezuela both to trade and set up future exchanges. Nevertheless, there were times when Venezuelans made the trip to Dutch centers. Sometimes merchants and planters carried their cacao and tobacco directly to Curaçao. Other times they met Curaçaoans on the Dutch islands of Kleine Curaçao or Bonaire or the Venezuelan islands of Las Aves, Los Roques, or Orchila to

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 68-69. See also his "Subordinate but Proud: Curaçao's Free Blacks and Mulattoes in the Eighteenth Century," *New West Indian Guide* 68:3 (1994), pp. 283-300.

trade or negotiate. Barter prevailed: Venezuelans received textiles, foodstuffs, arms, alcohol, and slaves in exchange for cacao, tobacco, hides, or mules. Curaçaoan captains and merchants extended credit to their regular trading partners, and so at times Dutch traders received written promises of future payments from their Venezuelan counterparts.⁴⁷

Most exchange took place in Venezuela's informal ports—the valleys, inlets, coves, and points that dotted the province's long coastline. This was done in a variety of ways. When the Curaçaoans enjoyed close relations with local officials, and when they saw little risk of capture, captains and merchants came ashore and dealt directly with their trading partners, the authority overseeing the exchange, or whomever was responsible for delivering the Venezuelan exports. More often an advanced party would confirm the terms of exchange. These were either groups of Venezuelans who took canoes out to the Dutch ships anchored offshore or sailors from the Dutch ships sent to the beach. Sometimes the Dutch convoys stayed in a particular port for just a night; other times, they stayed longer, especially at major sites of exchange, waiting for the various mule trains to arrive from the interior valleys or the human carriers to make all the prearranged deliveries. Some captains and merchants spoke Spanish and negotiated

⁴⁷ Often the promises committed portions of future harvests. Some of these debts were substantial. In 1709, Juan Chourio, factor for the French *asiento*, owed the West Indies Company 15,000 pesos and various merchants on Curaçao, 10,000 pesos. In 1722, the total debt owed to Curaçaoan creditors by Spanish merchants in Venezuela and Santo Domingo was calculated by Dutch authorities at 400,000 pesos. See Aizpurua, "Comercio exterior," p. 29; Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 129-130. For Venezuelans' visits to Curaçao see Aizpurua, *Curacao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 258-280, and Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 126-129. For the use of the small, uninhabited islands off the Venezuelan coast, see Aizpurua, "El comercio holandés en el Caribe," pp. 129-130, and Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 128-129.

directly with their Venezuelan counterparts. Others had translators, often free men of color from Curaçao, or based in Curaçao, who facilitated communications.⁴⁸

Two systems of transportation joined where Dutch and Venezuelans exchanged their goods: the Curaçaoan *kleine vaart* and the internal mechanisms for distributing goods within the Province of Venezuela. Critical in joining these two were the *prácticos*, the pilots who took charge of navigating the Dutch ships into and out of Venezuela's ports. In truth, *prácticos* did much more than this. They scouted for Dutch supercargoes and captains, found buyers and sellers in Venezuela's interior valleys, set up the times and locations for exchange, and secured official compliance or negligence. Some boarded Dutch ships in Willemstad and stayed aboard throughout the entire trip. Others came aboard at the Curaçaoan vessels' first port of call, or they met up with their Curaçaoan partners in Tucacas, Morón, or other sites along the coast. Still others remained on shore, traveling from coastal valley to coastal valley, just ahead of the Dutch ships, making arrangements for when they arrived. Most *prácticos* focused on a few coastal valleys and one or two routes between the sea and the interior. A select few enjoyed extensive patronage and worked the entire central coast, from the valleys east of La Guaira all the way to Tucacas.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 264-270, 281-283; and Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 125-126.

⁴⁹ See the royal decree issued in Madrid, November 27, 1657, Archivo General de la Nación (hereinafter AGN), Sección La Colonia, Reales Cédulas, Segunda Sección, Volume 1, Number 105, folio 159; "Autos del decomiso de contrabando introducido por Francisco Marín, efectuado por Diego de Matos, Comisionado del Gobernador," September 10, 1717, Archivo de la Academia Nacional de Historia de Venezuela (hereinafter AANH), Registro Principal (hereinafter RP), Signatura 1-10-4; "Autos contra Joseph Luis Felipes y Ignacio de Goya," 1746, AANH, RP, Signatura 2-384-1. Also see Aizpurua's *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 281-282; and Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 125-126.

Internal Commerce within the Province of Venezuela

The formal and informal ports along the coast connected Venezuela's foreign trade circuits with the various internal circuits of trade, transportation, and communication. These internal networks served to distribute imports and exports as well as local commodities bound for local markets.⁵⁰

For heuristic purposes, one can distinguish three systems that overlapped spatially and depended to some degree on one another. The first responded to the external trade. It served to move the main commodities between their points of production, exchange, and consumption. The second system articulated inter-regional trade. It served to connect people and goods across the province and between its largest markets and production centers. In the early eighteenth century the province broke down roughly into three economic regions. The first revolved around an axis formed by the capital city of Caracas and La Guaira, its port. Given the volume and value of the trade through La Guaira, it is possible to see this sphere extended across the entire province, but the capital-port axis exercised unchallenged control over a more restricted area. This would include the rural settlements immediately east and west of Caracas and the coastal valleys immediately surrounding La Guaira. The second regional economy joined the province's second port and its best natural harbor, Puerto Cabello, with its interior valley partner Valencia and the hinterlands surrounding them. These included the valleys of Aragua, the coastline that roughly corresponded with Valencia's jurisdictional border, and the northern reaches of the llanos under Caracas' administration. The third regional economy joined Barquisimeto, San Felipe, and the coastline extending from the mouth of

⁵⁰ The following discussion of the internal colonial economy in eighteenth-century Venezuela is based on Aizpurua, "Comercio interior: Siglos XVI-XVIII," in his *Temas de historia colonial*, pp. 43-51.

the Yaracuy River east to the Aroa and west to Tucacas. The third and final system repeated itself across the province in the local patterns that developed to satisfy basic consumption. All three had their legal and extra-legal components.

In work on the RCG's impact on the Venezuelan economy, most scholars have concentrated their attention on the company's challenges to the New Spain trade, to the Curaçaoan trade, and to mantuano economic and political primacy within the colony. Overlooked has been the internal dynamics of monopoly trade, namely the company's efforts to guarantee privilege in the province's cacao trade by imposing company interests on the multifarious local networks. The company pushed to control two of the three internal distributive circuits identified above. It left untouched the local supply of subsistence crops and provisions for local settlements. Nonetheless, its system of *factores* and *depósitos* was a new, unified, and vertical way of doing business in the colony. For many, especially those who lived inland in the interior valleys, removed from agricultural production, storage, or exchange along the coast, this was the most extensive and efficient distribution machine they had seen. An unstated goal of company policy was to eliminate the many local networks that competed with the RCG's system. The results were mixed, as RCG policy and officials were received and to a degree accepted by regional economic and political elites yet integrated into local practices, producing what were for the company unexpected results, often including the strengthening and not weakening of decentralizing forces.

CHAPTER 3
GOVERNORS, GROCERS, AND GOONS: THE DYNAMICS OF SMUGGLING AND
ANTI-SMUGGLING IN CARACAS

Aguila no caza moscas.

—Venezuelan saying¹

Caracas, Capital of the Province of Venezuela

It is useful to compare smuggling and the efforts to eliminate it, or anti-smuggling, in and around the province's capital city with the same activities in the other areas examined in this study. The contrast between the patterns of urban smuggling and rural smuggling highlight the different roles each played in the colonial economy. Over time the colonial administration shifted anti-smuggling resources from Caracas to the coastal and interior valleys east and west of the capital.

Before 1730 governors acted as both gendarme and judge in the city of Caracas. After 1730, with the founding of the RCG in Venezuela, governors' roles were diminished. In the provincial interior subalterns and delegates performed the tasks of surveillance, arrests, and confiscations and left the trials to the governor. In Caracas the governor was the ultimate authority in each of the steps in the *comisos* process. They did not, however, always perform them. In general they did not participate in night patrols along the city's streets or in the patrols in the outlying settlements. They did, however,

¹ Oft repeated by President Hugo Chávez Frías in 1999, his first year in office. In English, "The eagle does not hunt flies."

normally lead the visits to urban shops and stores, which frequently produced confiscations, trials, and deposits in the royal coffers.²

The governor, in appointing justices of the peace to the province's major coastal districts, did not expect them to suppress smuggling completely. Nor did he presume they would try. Instead, the justices of the peace were expected to keep extra-legal trade within acceptable bounds of social and political order. Their personal enrichment was to serve as a stabilizing force, designed to keep smuggling and smugglers under the loose control of Crown representatives.³ Likewise, the Crown, in appointing the governor, assumed the maximum provincial authority would enforce military, commercial, and social codes partially, with an eye to personal benefit. At the same time, he was to keep the delicate social order in balance.⁴

Individuals who aspired to be governor of Venezuela in the years before the Guipuzcoa Company paid to the Crown a down payment, or *futura*, which in the first 30 years of the eighteenth century ranged in value from 6000 to 16,000 pesos.⁵ Venality was widespread in the colonial bureaucracy, extending from the viceroy down to the justice of the peace. Military officers and career colonial administrators who sought to advance their careers understood that donating such large sums was a normal step in the

² During the period from 1693 to 1756, in the Real Hacienda comisos books, 43 deposits indicate that the governor was the arresting officer who performed the comiso. Of these, only one took place outside of the city of Caracas: the deposit from June 28, 1723, which resulted from Governor Portales' capture of 15 fanegas of cacao and 90 pounds of Barinas tobacco in Cabria, Nirgua jurisdiction. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, June 28, 1723, Volume 44, folios 191-192.

³ This dynamic will be given greater attention in the following chapters.

⁴ One can trace a succession of these compromised expectations from the Crown through the governor to his justices of the peace all the way down to their corporals assigned to specific routes, valleys, and beaches.

⁵ Ramón Aizpurua, *Curacao y la Costa de Caracas*, Cuadro 1, p. 54.

process. They often had to pay years before assuming office.⁶ They took out loans, often from merchants or bankers with connections in colonial trade, not only to finance the futura but also to cover the trip across the Atlantic, or from another post in the Indies. They rarely traveled alone. Usually they brought with them family, friends, and retainers who were eager to make good on their relative's or patron's appointment. The appointments were usually for five years, so the governor had little time to pay off the loan and the interest on it, make good on his appointment, and satisfy the needs of his large retinue.⁷

Caracas was the province's commercial, political, and social capital. It was the largest city, the colony's only substantial urban area. Joseph Luis de Cisneros, in his 1764 report on the province, placed the city's population at 26,340.⁸ It was the seat of the bishopric of Caracas. It had a seminary and beginning in 1725, Venezuela's first university. The city had 3 convents, 2 hospitals, and its main square had a fountain on

⁶ For example, Marcos de Betancourt, who paid 10,000 pesos in 1709, had to wait until 1716 before assuming office. Hector García Chuecos, *Siglo dieciocho venezolano* (Caracas: Ediciones Edime, 1956), p. 25. See also Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 53-54, which summarizes the futuras paid from 1699 to 1730.

⁷ On venality, see J.H. Parry, *The Sale of Public Office in the Spanish Indies Under the Hapsburgs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953); idem, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990 [1966]), pp. 207-211, 279-280; William Doyle, "Abolishing the Sale of Offices: Ambitions, Ambiguities, and Myths," *Canadian Journal of History* 32:3 (1997), pp. 339-345; idem, "The Sale of Offices in French History," *History Today* 46:9 (1996), pp. 39-44; idem, *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); and K.W. Swart, *The Sale of Offices in the Seventeenth Century* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1949). On colonial officials' tight relationship with merchants in the *repartimiento de efectos* system, see, for example, John K. Chance, *Conquest of the Sierra: Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Oaxaca* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), pp. 103-111, 146-150; and idem, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), pp. 108-110, 145-146.

⁸ Joseph Luis de Cisneros, *Descripción exacta de la Provincia de Venezuela* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1981), p. 121. Waldron tracks the city's growth over the eighteenth century: it had 6000 inhabitants in 1700; 20,000 in 1750, and 30,000 in 1800. Kathleen Waldron, "A Social History of a Primate City" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1979), p. 8.

each side.⁹ Many of the strands that made up the vast system of smuggling in the province began and ended in Caracas, as the city was the colony's center for buying and selling perishable and manufactured goods. Caracas served as a magnet for imports brought to the province in Spanish and foreign vessels. Goods transported from Spain, the Canary Islands, or New Spain on Spanish vessels ended up in Caracas, as did textiles and other imports from Curaçao.

Caracas served as a main node for informal imports but not for extra-legal exports. Traders, merchants, and muleteers averted the provincial capital when storing, transporting, and exchanging cacao, tobacco, or hides. The cacao moved along the coast, the tobacco followed routes to the sea that ended at ports closer to the points of production, and hides for export followed different routes from those for internal consumption. The Caracas market for cattle and their by-products was strong, but the hides that entered the city, or those that were produced there once cattle on the hoof were slaughtered, normally stayed and were used locally as trunks, knapsacks, furniture, or other items.¹⁰

Outside of Caracas, justices of the peace, their corporals, and coastal patrols could not effectively oversee the entire district, valley, or coastal strip for which they were responsible. Instead of overextending themselves, they concentrated their resources in key locations where smuggling or transprovincial transportation were most prevalent.

⁹ Cisneros, *Descripción exacta*, p. 120.

¹⁰ Cases involving the illegal introduction of cattle into the city of Caracas appear frequently among comisos records. Usually the cattle came from Macarao, an area just outside of Caracas to the southwest. Like the production of cane alcohol, the informal circulation of cattle through the jurisdiction, even though it did not involve imports or exports to and from the province, was classified and persecuted as a comiso violation. The capture of these cattle was registered as descaminos, land confiscations. AGN, Comisos, Volumes 1-26.

These included places like the mouth of the Yaracuy River in San Felipe, the Morón Point in Nirgua, and the Turiamo and Patanemo trails in Valencia. In each of these districts, the activity in the jurisdictional capital was restricted to juridical and administrative procedures. Rarely did smugglers or their cargo enter the city itself.

The district administered by Caracas showed similar patterns in its rural areas, but the city itself stood out in sharp contrast to its equivalents to the west—Valencia, Nirgua, and San Felipe. In the capital city Crown and municipal officials issued licenses, set prices, tried cases, auctioned confiscated goods, and jostled over political authority. In addition to this, Caracas was a center of contraband distribution. In this it was unique.

The district of Caracas sprawled over the largest area of any in Venezuela. From west to east it extended from the municipal border with Valencia at Choróní and Turmero all the way to the provincial border with New Andalusia, marked by the Unare River. Its coastline included the narrow coastal valleys from Choróní to Caruao as well as the sweeping shores around the Tacarigua Lagoon, where the Tuy River enters the Caribbean Sea. The jurisdiction extended south to the Ilanero district of San Sebastián. Cisneros estimated that the district ran 45 leagues east to west and 30 north to south. Besides the province's principal port and administrative capital, Caracas included some of the oldest cacao producing areas—the coastal valleys immediately east and west of La Guaira—as well as the province's newest, the Tuy River valley and the river's delta, regions known today as the Valles del Tuy and Barlovento. The district's central coast, central valleys, and western area included numerous *pueblos de indios*.¹¹ The mountains between

¹¹ These included along the coast, Torrequemada de Maiquetía, Tarmas, Carayaca, El Cojo, Macuto, Caravalleda, and Naiguatá; immediately south and west of Caracas, Antímano, La Vega, Baruta, San Diego, Paracotos, and Charallave; to the immediate east, Petare, Guarenas, Santa Lucía, Caucagua, and Marasma; and in the Valleys of Aragua to the west, La Victoria, San Mateo, Cagua, Turmero, and

Caracas and Aragua and the western valleys were also populated by Canary Islander immigrants (see Figure 3).¹²



Figure 3. The District of Caracas

The area around Turmero, Caracas' western edge, was an important tobacco smuggling center, second in the province only to Yagua, Turiamo, and Patanemo in Valencia. Much trade with the Dutch took place in Choroni and Chuao; imports were then brought over the coastal range to Aragua and distributed south to the llanos, east to Caracas and west to Valencia. As the cacao frontier pushed east into the Tuy River valley and towards Higuera, this area saw more and more Dutch ships, which anchored off Tacarigua and traded regularly with plantation slaves and employees as well as with the farmers, mostly Canary Islanders, settled in the area.

Maracay. As the creole rural population of Caracas grew in the west and as the African immigrant population grew along the cacao frontier, many of these settlements changed from Indian to Spanish towns.

¹² Cisneros, *Descripción exacta*, pp. 128-130.

The Quiet Trade through La Guaira

A different form of contraband took place at La Guaira, very important but much harder to trace than the flagrant violation of laws against trading with or fraternizing with foreigners. Legal ships that sailed between La Guaira and Spain, the Canary Islands, and New Spain introduced normally permissible goods by illicit means. Sometimes proscribed items, like Chinese silks, arrived in La Guaira, but for the most part, the infractions committed at the port were variations on tax evasion: underreporting, underweighing, or hiding items such as brandy, wheat flour, and textiles to avoid paying the litany of taxes at the port. Textiles were the most common item in this informal trade: of the 978 Real Hacienda comisos entries between 1693 and 1756, 169, took place in or near the port of La Guaira. Of these 169, 110 involved textiles of some sort.¹³ Most of the illegal introduction of wheat flour occurred at La Guaira. Of the 20 confiscations reported to the royal treasury, 12 took place in the port.¹⁴

Smuggling at La Guaira caused little controversy and stirred no rivalry among local authorities because it was a well-regulated system in which imports from the Canary Islands, Spain, and New Spain were taxed formally and informally and goods entered the province unregistered but not unknown to the officials responsible for their regulation.

As La Guaira was Caracas' first line of defense against foreign incursion, defensive

¹³ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Volumes 33-63A.

¹⁴ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Volumes 34-63A. Wheat flour smuggling took various forms. Sometimes registry ship captains from the Canary Islands carried more loads than were reported or taxed. Other times merchants and captains who received special license from the governor to obtain wheat from Caribbean islands imported more than their contract stipulated. Usually they retrieved North American flour on the French island of Martinique, although trips to Curaçao became more common later in the century. These exceptions to the ban against trade with non-Spanish colonies usually took place during times of war, when visits from transatlantic ships were rare and the peninsular and creole elite population of Caracas demanded wheat flour for bread. Finally, at times Dutch traders from Curaçao, French captains from Martinique, or English *asiento* employees tried to sneak the flour into the province, usually at La Guaira but at times at some of the coastal valleys west of the port.

concerns were preeminent. As a result, the administration of the port was in the hands of the military. Imports dominated the Real Hacienda comisos account books; exports rarely were recorded.¹⁵ Obviously Dutch traders avoided Venezuela's key coastal military position, but this only partially explains the pattern of contraband captures in and around La Guaira. Crown officials and the merchants who imported and exported through La Guaira exercised tight control over the port.¹⁶

A rare instance in which military officials at the port captured cacao on the way out hints at the accords that operated and the profound silence the documentary records presents in the face of these operations. Manuel Juan de Acosta, a vecino of Havana and resident of La Guaira, purchased, stored, and transported cacao in the 1740s and 1750s. He bought in Caracas' coastal valleys, stored the fruit in his warehouse in La Guaira, and trucked it to Veracruz in his frigate, Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria.¹⁷ On September 20, 1754, he arranged with the guard at La Caleta to allow a canoe loaded with 22 fanegas 55 pounds of cacao to slip out of the port during the night.¹⁸ For their

¹⁵ Only 6 entries from La Guaira resulted from the capture of cacao. The 2 entries that involved tobacco were for imported snuff. Two entries involved the province's third leading illegal export, hides, but in each case, the comiso was of textiles introduced illegally. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Volumes 34-63A.

¹⁶ For similar port dynamics in which officials assigned to suppress smuggling benefited the most from it, compare Ernst Pijning, "Conflicts in the Portuguese Colonial Administration: Trials and Errors of Luís Lopes Pegado e Serpa, Provedor-Mor da Fazenda Real in Salvador, Brazil, 1718-1721," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 2:4 (1993), pp. 403-423; and Zacarias Moutoukias, "Power, Corruption, and Commerce: The Making of the Local Administrative Structure in Seventeenth-Century Buenos Aires," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 68:4 (1988), pp. 771-801; and idem, *Contrabando y control colonial en el siglo XVII: Buenos Aires, el Atlántico y el espacio peruano* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1988).

¹⁷ "Autos criminales seguidos contra el Capitán don Manuel Juan de Acosta y otro por haber sacado de su bodega que tenía en el puerto de La Guaira porción de fanegas de cacao," La Guaira, September 14, 1734, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 3-736-3, folios 1-71.

¹⁸ A Guipuzcoa Company frigate was in the process of unloading that night. Although no mention is made of where the canoe loaded with cacao was heading, I assume the plan was to load it onto the company ship.

negligence, the guard and his patrol received 30 pesos to divide amongst them. Originally, Governor Felipe Ricardos determined that the cacao, captured by another patrol at the port, was a legitimate *comiso*. He declared it lost, instructed Acosta to pay the required export taxes on it, banned the soldiers involved from patrolling La Caleta, and sentenced them to pay the royal treasury 30 pesos.¹⁹ Then Acosta's warehouse was inventoried. After the main display cabinet, front counter, and some flasks of wine were listed, the inventory abruptly cut off before the cacao stored in Acosta's building and the names of its owners were included. Upon receiving the inventory, Ricardos reversed his decision—he returned the cacao to Acosta and the 30 pesos to the soldiers and instructed the warden of La Guaira to allow them to patrol La Caleta, just as long as they did not involve themselves in any smuggling.²⁰ Ricardos was keen to protecting the identity of the members of the Caracas elite who used Acosta's services to export their cacao.

The governors in Caracas did not participate directly in the anti-smuggling efforts at La Guaira. They delegated authority to the military commander of the coastal presidio and concentrated their energies elsewhere. Normally, the governors of Venezuela were careful not to undercut or challenge the authority they granted to their local delegates throughout the province. In contraband cases, the arresting officer or individual who first leveled the accusation or informed a local authority of some infraction, received one-third of the total value of the confiscated goods. The governors made sure this went to their local delegates as frequently as possible, since justices of the peace, special commissioners, and patrol leaders depended on this money for their sustenance and for

¹⁹ Ricardos passed this sentence on November 18, 1754. "Autos criminales seguidos contra el Capitán don Manuel Juan de Acosta," folios 54v-55.

²⁰ *Ibid*, folios 66-66v. This happened later the same day as Ricardos' original determination.

making good on their appointments.²¹ Moreover, the governors were guaranteed another third as judges in comisos cases.²² With the founding of the RCG, governors depended less on this share, as they received salaries from the company.

The Governors' Focus on Caracas: Tools and Tactics

The governors of Venezuela encouraged their subordinates to make smuggling arrests and denounce smuggling activities; at the same time they asserted their role as judge in comisos case from around the province. Though they had the powers to make arrests anywhere in the province, they restricted their policing to the city of Caracas, where they exercised both the role of enforcer and judge.²³ In Caracas the governor had regular, predictable access to fixed locations where smuggled goods were stored and exchanged. The city drew people from the llanos, from Barlovento, from the coast, and from the districts to the west. Merchants, grocery store owners, and street vendors attracted the most attention from the governor's office.

²¹ An exception to this was the short-lived RCG patrols on land and sea in the Barlovento area. Manned exclusively by company employees, these patrols did not last beyond the company's first two years in the province.

²² The last third went to the Crown. The Crown gave strict instructions that comisos cases and confiscated goods should be sent to the provincial capital as quickly as possible. The goods were to be held in the Real Hacienda buildings, their auction was to be done in the capital, and prisoners detained in Caracas. In 1753, Governor Ricardos tried to convince the Crown to allow him to grant greater powers to the military commander at Puerto Cabello. Specifically, he wanted to know if the commander could serve as both captor and judge in the many comisos cases that resulted from arrests along the neighboring coast. The governor argued that this would increase the money earned by officials stationed at Puerto Cabello and would make for faster, better trials, without the cost and complications of transferring prisoners, captured goods, and the accused's confiscated assets to Caracas. The Crown rejected Ricardos' suggestions, insisting that the captor could not be the judge and that sentencing in comisos cases had to be done by the governor. AGN, Reales Ordenes, Order #83, December 19, 1753, Volume 2, folios 184-187.

²³ Of the 16 Real Hacienda comisos deposits that listed the governor as the arresting official, only one arrest, from 1723, took place outside of Caracas. Governor Diego Portales, who spent as much time away from the capital and out of office as in during his 8 years in Venezuela (1721 to 1728), captured 15 fanegas of cacao and 90 pounds of Barinas tobacco in Cabria Valley, Nirgua. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, June 28, 1723, Volume 44, folios 191-192.

The governors utilized Crown directives and local regulations to make comisos arrests and confiscations in Caracas routine. The Crown declared, as early as 1640, that evidential standards were reduced in cases of contraband.²⁴ The Crown repeated during the eighteenth century the call for alacrity in the prosecution of smugglers and those who made fraudulent forced landings.²⁵ Speed was more important than judicial form. Additionally, the governor and his local delegates across the province utilized certain tools that facilitated arrests and confiscation, even when the legality of the commodity was not in question. *Bandos*—periodic public announcements of policies and prohibitions—included provisions that allowed colonial administrators to impose fines and target certain individuals, activities, and locations involved in smuggling without necessarily locating the smuggled goods themselves.²⁶

The bando provisions aimed to limit petty exchange. Grocery store owners, or *pulperos*, were required to obtain an operating license from the governor, his local

²⁴ The 1640 real cédula is included in a later one of 1660. AGN, Reales Cédulas, Segunda Sección, Volume 2, RC #76, December 13, 1660, folios 111-113. On December 13, 1660, Charles II reiterated these instructions, adding fraudulent forced landings (*arribadas falsas*) to the list of crimes that required less evidence. The king also instructed officials that the judicial privileges and exceptions—the *fueros*—enjoyed by members of the clergy and the military, should be lifted in cases of smuggling and false *arribada*. There is little evidence from eighteenth-century Venezuela that would indicate that local officials enforced this last provision.

²⁵ A real cédula of October 17, 1702, endorsed Governor Nicolás Eugenio Ponte de Hoyo's call for speedy trials in smuggling cases from in and around the city of Caracas. AGN, Reales Cédulas, Segunda Sección, Volume 5, RC #54, October 17, 1702, folio 80. In a real order of January 5, 1754, the Crown urged the governor of Venezuela to aim for brevity in cases of corsair captures: "que en las causas de presas se proceda breve, y sumariamente, sin formar artículos, diligencias ociosas, ni dilatorias, que solo sirven de consumir el tiempo, y mucha parte del valor de lo que se controvierte, con irreparable perjuicio de los interesados, hacienda, por este medio ilusorias las sentencias, cuando llega el caso de su ejecución." AGN, Reales Ordenes, Volume 2, Order #84, January 5, 1754, folios 188-189v.

²⁶ Examples of *bandos* for the city of Caracas will be presented in the discussion of Governor Betancourt's period in office, below. Examples from the interior are "Bando de Bueno Gobierno," Turnero, January 6, 1726, AGN, Diversos, Volume 2, folios 1-4, reprinted in *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación* 58:214 (1968), pp. 19-24; and "Bandos sobre diversos particulares del comercio ilícito, que ordenó publicar en los Valles de San Sebastián, Ocumare y Cata el Teniente Justicia Mayor don Pedro Tinoro de Castilla," November 28, 1756, AGN, Archivo de Aragua, Volume 2, Expediente 1, folios 1-13.

representative, or the local cabildo. The license cost 30 pesos and had to be renewed annually.²⁷ They were also required to have a financial backer, or *fiador*, in case they suffered severe economic hardship.²⁸ Commercial activities were restricted spatially. Pulperos could operate only in specially designated sectors in the city of Caracas.²⁹ Typically, the bandos banned transactions after dark.³⁰ Sales in the streets were prohibited; transactions were to be done in licensed merchant or pulpero stores or, in the case of Caracas, in the designated open stalls along the principal plaza. Pulperos were restricted to selling their wares to free adults during the daytime. They were not allowed to buy from or sell to minors, slaves, or "suspicious persons," unless specific instructions were issued beforehand.³¹ All pulperías were required to have a *reja*, or iron grille, which was to be closed at night.³² Furthermore, they were restricted in the types of

²⁷ Grocery stores in Caracas were organized into two tax groups: *pulperías de ordenanza*, regulated by the municipal council; and *pulperías de composición*, regulated by the royal treasury. According to the Real Hacienda pulperia tax books, in 1703 there were 50 pulperías de ordenanza in Caracas; in 1707, there were 45; and from 1703 to 1717, there were never more than 50 pulperías de ordenanza or 50 pulperías de composición. Jay Kinsbruner, *Petty Capitalism in Spanish America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), p. 12. He cites Waldron's "A Social History," p. 278, and the AGN, Real Hacienda, Composición de pulperia (1717-1765), Volume 2397. For the number of pulperías before the tax book was opened, see the above-mentioned AGN volume, folios 3-3v.

²⁸ Rafael Ramón Castellanos, *Historia de la pulperia en Venezuela* (Caracas: Editorial Cabildo, 1988), p. 69.

²⁹ Exceptions could be and were made, of course, so long as the pulpero obtained permission and license. Betancourt liked this rule very much, imposing numerous *penas de cámara* fines on individuals who operated pulperías outside of the designated shop district.

³⁰ Often the stipulation was that pulperías should not sell after the *ánimas* bell rung. Some bandos imposed a general curfew after *ánimas*—no one was to be on the street after they sounded.

³¹ Castellanos includes blacks, mulattoes, Indians, and slaves on the list of suspicious persons. Castellanos, *Historia de la pulperia*, pp. 66, 73.

³² The grille served two purposes: it was meant to prevent theft and to discourage improper gatherings in or around the stores after hours. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

payment they could receive. Gold and silver, especially if minted in denominations greater than 4 reales, were suspect; precious jewels were prohibited as tender.³³

Shop owners also had to comply with various requirements inside their stores. The local cabildo produced an annual price list every January. Pulperos were to purchase this *arancel* for 5 pesos and have it on hand in their shops; prices were not to exceed the listed prices by more than 10%. Various items required official seals, confirmation of proper weight, or official indication that the goods were purchased in sanctioned markets or from approved wholesale merchants or distributors.³⁴

With each of these infractions, if the investigating officer determined it necessary, the accused's personal possessions were confiscated.³⁵ Other charges were added if prohibited or smuggled goods were found during the course of inventory.

Urban patrols, spies, and colonial officials took advantage of these directives on proper commercial behavior to target smugglers. They proved much more effective in

³³ This last restriction probably had little impact in eighteenth-century Caracas and close to none in the smaller towns and hamlets of the interior. Barter was the most common form of trade, and when goods were not exchanged, pulperos issued and received tokens (in Spanish, *fichas* or *señas*) or written promises of future payment. By the early eighteenth century, with the growth of trade with New Spain, specie became more common in the province, though usually concentrated in the capital and its port of La Guaira. Pulperías experienced an increase in the circulation of altered coins, originally from Mexico, which pulperos and others cut into pieces to represent smaller denominations. At any rate, *fichas* and informal coins continued to be the norm in pulpero transactions throughout the eighteenth century. Some pulperos issued their own one-quarter and one-eighth real coins made of copper, lead, or tin, often marked to designate their store of origin. Only in 1802 did the Caracas cabildo begin to regulate the use of tokens. Before that date, pulperos issued them on their own volition. Castellanos, *Historia de la pulpería*, p. 94; Gorgias R. Garriga, *Fichas, señas y ñapas de Venezuela* (Caracas: Cuadernos Lagoven, 1979), pp. 13, 19.

³⁴ The cabildo officer in charge of inspecting pulperías and issuing *aranceles* was the *fiel ejecutor*. By law, all goods sold in pulperías had to be weighed, measured, or inspected before being put on sale. The most frequent violations had to do with textiles that did not have a governor's seal, bread and other comestibles that lacked indication of having been properly weighed (*faltos de peso*), and meat and other goods without proof of purchase in the required marketplace. Castellanos, *Historia de la pulpería*, pp. 69-75, 137-142.

³⁵ Guilty until proven otherwise, individuals accused of violating Crown law in colonial Venezuela almost always had to cover the costs of their trials, regardless of their outcome. The confiscation guaranteed that some, if not all, of the costs would be covered.

urban areas than in rural. Many of the regulations were hard to enforce outside of Caracas, as most people in the interior districts lived in the countryside, general stores were scant, and many of the regulations, developed with urban settlements in mind, did not apply.³⁶ In Caracas, many of the rules were easier to enforce, and the large number of shops meant that enforcers had good chances of finding more than one locale in violation of at least one of the regulations. Nonetheless, enforcement was not always a simple issue. Pulperos depended on the cabildo for aranceles, and the cabildo was not always expedient in producing and distributing copies. Sometimes they stocked or sold pieces of linens or textiles they had either purchased at a comisos auction or they had already sold the corner that had the official seal on it.³⁷ A simpler and surer means of pressuring or manipulating pulperos and their clients was through the ban on locally produced alcohol.

For the Crown and the House of Trade, the ban served to guarantee the American market for Andalusian and Canary brandies.³⁸ For local officials in Venezuela, the ban served additional purposes not foreseen by policy makers in Spain. From 1693 the Crown outlawed the production of cane alcohol (*aguardiente de cañas*) in the Indies. The monarch repeated this prohibition in 1714 and included instructions for the disposal

³⁶ In rural jurisdictions, the few local stores were not officially designated pulperías, nor did they pay the standard operating fee. They were frequently located at principal crossroads or on major transportation routes, like Yagua in Valencia and along the Yaracuy River. Also, though they were not formally licensed, the proprietors of these places more often than not enjoyed friendly relations with the local political powers. Examples of this type of rural store will be discussed in the following chapters on Valencia and Nirgua.

³⁷ I assume some pulperos claimed to have sold the edge of the bolt or piece of cloth where the seal was presumably placed.

³⁸ José Angel Rodríguez summarizes the Crown prohibition, Venezuelan clandestine productive activities, and the lifting of the ban on production at the end of the eighteenth century. See his "Clandestinidad, contrabando y consumo del aguardiente de caña en Venezuela en el siglo XVIII," *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* (Caracas) 6:261 (1983), pp. 145-160; and idem, "Venezuelan Rums in the Nineteenth Century," in Erik Aerts et al., eds., *Production, Marketing, and Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages since the late Middle Ages* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), pp. 56-67.

of production materials and punishment of violators.³⁹ The penalties for owners of cane alcohol or distilling equipment were harsh: 100 pesos fine for the first offense, 2000 peso for the second, and 3000 pesos and expulsion from the colony for the third.⁴⁰ All distilling equipment was to be confiscated and destroyed. Governors in Venezuela followed Crown instructions on breaking stills and their accessories, but they failed to impose the fines indicated by the real cédula. Instead, they used the capture of cane alcohol or production equipment to gain greater access to pulperos' inventories and target other activities.

Before the justice of the peace became a widespread and regular institution in the province in the 1720s and before the RCG was established in the 1730s, the governors concentrated most of their energies on commerce in Caracas. Their interests and foci shifted as the number of comisos arrests, confiscations, auctions, and deposits from the provincial interior increased, beginning in the 1720s, and as the governor's duties as maximum military, political, and commercial officer became more closely intertwined with the company's trade monopoly. As the colonial population and productive activity expanded, so too did the colonial bureaucracy. And as governors appointed and hired more subordinates to perform more specialized tasks or operate in smaller and smaller areas, they tended to do less comisos work themselves, relying upon their growing networks of military officers, road and beach patrols, and spies for information and action.

³⁹ AGN, Reales Cédulas, Primera Sección, Volume 10, RC #337, August 10, 1714, folios 168-177v. The Crown included the 1693 ban in this real cédula.

⁴⁰ The monies from the fines were to be divided one-third for the presiding judge and two-thirds to the royal treasury of the Consejo de Indias in Spain.

Governors used various strategies to make their time in office worthwhile. Here I will discuss three. First, they collaborated with the merchants who dominated the legal transatlantic trade with Spain and the Canary Islands. The smuggling of legal but unreported goods through La Guaira is best considered in light of the governors' dependence on the merchants. In general, governors in Caracas refrained from challenging these men, and they made sure their subordinates did the same. The rare times when they did take on a *mercader* are revealing. Second, they sold offices, principally justice of the peace and corregidor positions. The same pattern of expectations of personal advance, debt, and collusion played out in these smaller contexts of the coastal valley, the Indian town, or the interior creole settlement as on the provincial level. Candidates paid the governor a provincial version of the *futura* so as to exercise similar power to that of the governor. Third, the governors concentrated their attention on restricting commerce in and around the city of Caracas so as to maximize exchange through particular retail and wholesale stores. The main target for these actions was the urban retail grocery stores.⁴¹

Governor Ponte y Hoyo, who contributed a *futura* of 16,000 pesos to secure the governorship, chose to collect his dues quickly, taking direct aim at the Caracas-based merchants. Shortly after his arrival in the province in April 1699, Ponte carried out a *visita* to all the stores in the city. He found a number of merchants had Chinese silks in stock, which they insisted were imported legally from Veracruz, although they no longer

⁴¹ For other examples of governors' reliance on merchants for material and capital resources, see Robert W. Patch, *Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1648-1812* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 81-93; and Susan M. Socolow, *The Bureaucrats of Buenos Aires, 1769-1810: Amor al Real Servicio* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), pp. 229-256. For a general statement, see Catherine Lugar, "Merchants," in Louisa Schell Hoberman and Susan Migden Socolow, eds., *Cities and Society in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), p. 61.

had proof of their purchase.⁴² Not sure if Chinese textiles were allowed in Venezuela, Ponte y Hoyo decided to confiscate all of them and then seek guidance from Madrid.⁴³ The Crown's response, a real cédula of July 4, 1700, made clear that Chinese silks could be imported into New Spain but that all reexports from there were forbidden.⁴⁴ Through appeals to the Audiencia de Santo Domingo, the Caracas merchants managed to put off the confiscation and auction of their silks, but the governor ultimately prevailed. The merchants began paying their respective fines by 1703. All together, they totaled 5295 pesos 4 reales 22.33 maravedís.⁴⁵

José Francisco de Cañas y Merino, governor of Venezuela from 1711 to 1714, also chose to challenge the Caracas merchant and landed elite directly. The punishment he gave to commoners was also uncommon in the province. The Crown granted him his five years in office thanks to his military service in North Africa and his 10,000-pesos futura.⁴⁶ He took his post officially on July 6, 1711. On July 15, he carried out a visita to

⁴² This was a common response among merchants and grocery store operators when their textiles were confiscated: that they originally had the seal indicated a legal purchase or a tax paid, but as this was on the edge of the piece of linen in question, it was usually the first part to be sold. Others argued that they would have liked to have procured the necessary stamps and seals, but the governor was not around to give them.

⁴³ Governor Ponte y Hoyo took office on April 9, 1699; he wrote the Crown on May 15, 1699. AGN, Reales Cédulas, Segunda Sección, Volume 4, RC #82, July 5, 1700, folio 140.

⁴⁴ Ibid. The Crown and the Consejo de Indias were concerned about protecting the *obrajes* in the Viceroyalty of Peru. They worried that Chinese silks introduced into Venezuela would eventually make their way south into the Andes, where buyers would prefer them to local products or textiles shipped from Spain.

⁴⁵ The amount paid by each merchant varied. Juan Florencia, a Caracas vecino who owned a merchant house, paid 120 pesos. Tomás de Aquino, another merchant caught by Ponte with Chinese silks, was fined 558 pesos 2 reales. His widow, Jacinta del Rosario, contracted with Joseph Acosta to pay her deceased husband's debt. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, February 19, 1703, Volume 34, folios 140-140v; and April 26, 1703, folio 140v.

⁴⁶ Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, p. 54; Luis Alberto Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales de Venezuela* (Caracas: Tipografía Tecnocolor, 1964 [1928]), p. 207.

the city's stores, finding a variety of proscribed textiles.⁴⁷ On this first visit he confiscated nothing, instead imposing fines ranging from 10 to 400 pesos on 37 mercaderes.⁴⁸ He warned that if the merchants did not legalize their smuggled textiles within 8 days, he would confiscate them.

Cañas y Merino concentrated his energies on the city of Caracas. He carried out no visita general to the province's interior. He established 2 stores in the city to sell the goods he confiscated.⁴⁹ And he meted out the harshest punishment: Sucre reports that he hanged 11 muleteers—one of them a minor—for transporting smuggled goods.⁵⁰ In May of 1712, he carried out another visita to the Caracas stores and merchant houses. This time he did confiscate the textiles he identified as contraband. They sold at auction for 2225 pesos 3 reales.⁵¹

Cañas y Merino made quick enemies of the Caracas commercial and political elite. The cabildo complained to the Crown of his excesses, and in 1714, the last two years of

⁴⁷ Among these were jerkins, striped cloths, and other unspecified items. "Juicio seguido por los oficiales reales don Juan de Urbina y don Andrés Alonso Gil, contra don Francisco de Cañas y Merino, gobernador que fue de Venezuela, por haber dispuesto 1595 pesos, sacados por multas impuestas a los mercaderes de esta ciudad, y se dice aplicada para los reparos de las fortificaciones de La Guaira," Caracas, November 23, 1714, AGN, Comisos, Volume 2, Expediente 3, folios 45-81.

⁴⁸ The fines totaled 1735 pesos. *Ibid.*, folios 49-49v.

⁴⁹ Letizia Vaccari San Miguel, *Sobre gobernadores y residencias en la Provincia de Venezuela (siglos XVI, XVII, XVIII)* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1992), pp. 120-121. She follows Sucre very closely. He writes, "A poco de haber llegado, con el mayor descaro estableció dos tiendas en Caracas, y dió principio a una activísima persecución al contrabando; no era provecho del fisco, ni para garantía de los mercaderes que pagaban su impuesto, sino con el propósito de monopolizarlo para sí." Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*, p. 211.

⁵⁰ Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*. They were caught in Cerritos de Cocorote with 60 mules loaded with cacao and tobacco. They also carried letters from the "Marquis de Tucacas." Wim Kooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 154; Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe*, Volume 1, pp. 144-148.

⁵¹ Of an original auction total of 17,803 reales, the Real Hacienda received 12,328 reales 20 maravedís (or 1541 pesos 20 maravedís), but only in 1716. The merchants appealed his ruling to the Audiencia de Santo Domingo, and it was not until 4 years later that the Crown ruled their appeal null and void. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, February 24, 1716, Volume 38, folios 146-146v.

his five-year term were cut off when he was called back to Spain to stand trial for his transgressions.⁵²

Ponte y Hoyo and Cañas y Merino were exceptional governors, for in general, the functionaries avoided confrontation with the Caracas merchants. Of the 76 comisos deposits from the city of Caracas from 1693 to 1756, only 5 involved mercaderes. Three of these resulted from actions take by these two governors.⁵³ More common were arrangements in which the mercaderes and governors joined efforts to create a context of smuggling and its repression that benefited them mutually.

Don Marcos de Betancourt y Castro, Governor of Venezuela

This system achieved its maximum expression under Marcos de Betancourt y Castro (1716-1720). No governor before him came as close to achieving a monopoly over extra-legal trade in the province, and none after him tried. Unlike his predecessors, Betancourt managed to articulate the repression of smuggling in the province's interior and coastal valleys with the governor's heavy influence over commerce in the capital. The system that Betancourt and his collaborators put together worked with relative success for three years and was a forerunner of things to come. In the future, the articulation that the governor and his friends achieved would be done through the institution of the monopoly trade company. Betancourt's was the most developed and most successful personally based system, in which the informal monopoly stores were owned by the governor, and the repressive activity along the coast and in the interior was organized by and around Betancourt's confidant, the Juez General de Comisos.

⁵² Vaccari San Miguel, *Sobre gobernadores y residencias*, pp. 121-122.

⁵³ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volumes 33-63A.

Betancourt gave a substantial *futura* and waited long for his post as governor of Venezuela.⁵⁴ When his turn finally came, the Tenerife native lost little time, throwing himself directly into the vast and murky networks of extra-legal trade, communication, and travel between Venezuela and Curaçao. The last leg of his journey from the Canary Islands to Caracas followed one of the paramount routes along which Venezuelan cacao and Dutch textiles circulated. His ship made an unexplained forced landing at Curaçao, where he met with Friar Agustín Caicedo y Velasco. In 1715 the bishop of Caracas had named Caicedo, an Augustinian friar born to a wealthy family in Bogotá, prefect for the Church's mission efforts on Curaçao and the other Dutch possessions in the Caribbean. Caicedo was familiar with both the island and Amsterdam, having traveled through and visited the two places repeatedly in the previous decades. Friar Caicedo served in this capacity and lived on Curaçao until his death in 1738. He most likely also served as a broker for Dutch merchants in Amsterdam, Dutch traders on Curaçao, and Venezuelan smugglers from the coast and the llanos. By the time Betancourt reached the island, he had a reputation on the mainland for dealing in Barinas tobacco.⁵⁵

From Curaçao Betancourt sailed for La Guaira, but on June 22, 1716, he instead made another forced landing, this time pulling into Chuao, a popular port among Dutch

⁵⁴ See footnote 6 above.

⁵⁵ Analola Borges, *La casa de Austria en Venezuela durante la Guerra de Sucesión Española* (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Goya Arte Gráficas, 1963), p. 117. See Chapter 6 on San Felipe for more on the commercial connections between regular order members on Curaçao and their counterparts on Tierra Firme. Carlos Felice Cardot, in his *Curacao hispánico (antagonismo flamenco-español)* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1973) discusses Caicedo's biography, pp. 397-401. His brother, Juan Beltrán de Caicedo, was governor of Santa Marta in New Granada from 1718 to 1726. He challenged the local bishop, Antonio de Monroy y Meneses, for control over smuggling and its repression in the region. Lance Grahn, *The Political Economy of Smuggling*, p. 82.

traders operating out of Curaçao.⁵⁶ Betancourt arrived with his wife, his children, and his brother in Caracas 12 days later, taking office on July 4, 1716.⁵⁷

Like Cañas y Merino, Betancourt opened a pair of stores, one in La Guaira and the other in Caracas. Unlike him, Betancourt implemented extensive mechanisms that pushed trade from all parts of the province towards them. First, he took measures in and around Caracas to secure a commercial advantage. Second, he hired a daring man to enforce anti-smuggling policy and the governor's additional orders outside of Caracas.

The steps Betancourt took in Caracas created an organizational and repressive framework through which goods and people associated with the governor moved. The stores in La Guaira and Caracas formed part of what was informally referred to as the *Compañía Real*, a syndicate of Betancourt's friends and family members who bought and sold legal and illegal goods with Betancourt's protection and approval.⁵⁸ In Caracas, the company distributed goods through the home of don Francisco de Monasterios el Viejo.⁵⁹ The bandos he issued for the city imposed stricter controls on pulperías than previous decrees. He hired spies, though they never were referred to as such, to report to him any

⁵⁶ Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*, p. 219. Betancourt claimed bad weather impeded his vessel from landing at La Guaira. Three years later, the newly appointed bishop of Caracas, Doctor Juan José de Escalona y Calatayud, repeated the maneuver. He too was forced to make an emergency landing, now at Choroní, the coastal valley immediately west of Chuao, on November 13, 1719. A small boat that cruised the sotovento valleys delivered him to La Guaira two days later. Biblioteca del Consejo Municipal de Caracas, *Actas del Cabildo de Caracas*, Volume 66, 1719, folio 61.

⁵⁷ Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*, p. 219.

⁵⁸ Diana Rengifo, "La gobernación del canario Marcos de Betancourt," *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* (Caracas) 59:235 (1976), p. 509. According to Arauz Monfante, this group included Betancourt's son Simón, his brother-in-law Juan Carrasco, Francisco de Monasterios el Mozo, and Francisco de Emazavel, among others. Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe*, Volume 1, p. 191.

⁵⁹ It is not clear if Monasterios operated a wholesale or retail store out of his residence. No Monasterios appears in the grocery store tax list (the *composición de pulperías*) for Caracas during Betancourt's time as governor. AGN, Real Hacienda, *Composición de Pulperías*, Caracas, Volume 2397, folios 5-20v.

suspicious activity or persons in or on the outskirts of the city. He instituted a seal system for all merchandise sold in Caracas and La Guaira, regardless of its status before Betancourt assumed power. Anything that lacked his seal was to be confiscated. Some store owners complained that they did not know what the seal looked like, as they had never seen it. Others claimed that they were willing to legalize their merchandise with Betancourt but that he was not around to do so.⁶⁰

Betancourt's orders on commercial activity in the city simplified his urban patrols' surveillance work and his punishment of violators. His first *bando de buen gobierno* included terms that restricted commercial property and activity spatially within the city of Caracas. A few blocks close to the center of town were designated as the only acceptable location for pulperías and mercaderías.⁶¹ This made the job of his urban, usually evening, patrols easier, as they could make infrequent sweeps through the outer parts of town, identify any locale that was selling goods, and report it to the governor. This way they did not need to catch smugglers in the act or see for themselves goods that lacked royal stamps and seals. Likewise, the zoning order meant that they could concentrate their patrols and thereby subject the streets and the stores to closer vigilance. Betancourt executed the traditional governor's first visita to Caracas' commercial establishments, largely to implement his seal system, but after that, he refrained from personally patrolling and confiscating. In this he broke with previous governors, who more

⁶⁰ Rengifo, "La gobernación del canario;" Carlos Felice Cardot, "Noticias sobre la visita acordada a la Provincia de Venezuela, en 1720, por el Virrey del Nuevo Reino de Granada Jorge de Villalonga. Visitador Pedro Martín Beato," in *Memoria del Segundo Congreso Venezolano de Historia* (Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1975), Volume I, pp. 311-337.

⁶¹ Betancourt fined Andrés de Armas, Salvador Delgado, Miguel Hurtado, and Julián Hernández Socas for operating shops in a private residence outside of the designated commercial zone. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, July 14, 1717, Volume 38, folios 299-299v.

frequently collected the prize for both denouncer and judge in comisos cases.⁶² He did, nonetheless, lead another visita in August 18, 1717, three weeks after he had repeated his seal regulation in a new bando of July 13, 1717. He did his tour after receiving reports on compliance with the order.⁶³

It was under Betancourt that arrests and confiscations for the production, possession, or distribution of cane alcohol became a fixture in comisos proceedings. Previous governors enforced the ban infrequently. Betancourt also set the tone for punishing violators, sending muleteers, cane alcohol producers, and street vendors to perform hard labor in the colony's coastal defenses,⁶⁴ and confiscating contraband goods from pulperos and imposing nominal fines on them.⁶⁵

Betancourt also confronted what would be an enduring obstacle for governors in their efforts to control cane alcohol production and smuggling: the clergy. In one

⁶² Betancourt was the arresting official in only one comisos case in the city of Caracas: He confiscated some textiles in a house in the San Pablo neighborhood. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, May 27, 1719, Volume 39/40, folios 57-57v. Nevertheless, the number of comisos deposits, in and outside of Caracas, rose during Betancourt's time in office. In 1714 there was one comisos deposit; in 1715, 11. In 1716, the first year of Betancourt's term, the total jumped to 19. There were 82 total deposits during the years he was governor.

⁶³ First-time violators were to be fined 10 pesos; second-time violators suffered a 20-pesos fine, the confiscation of their goods, and the loss of their oficio de mercader. All textiles and clothing that did not have a seal within fifteen days of the bando's announcement would be confiscated. From "Autos formados contra don Francisco Corromar, Pedro Cadenas, Francisco Toledo y Juan Fernández Betancourt, mercaderes de esta ciudad por habérseles encontrado en sus tiendas géneros sin los sellos correspondientes," Caracas, December 3, 1717, AGN, Volume 3, Expediente 4, folios 278-280, 281-281v.

⁶⁴ See "Causa criminal seguida contra José Gregorio de Fuenmayor por habérsele aprehendido un poco de aguardiente de caña," Caracas, April 1, 1718, AGN, Comisos, Volume 3, Expediente 2, folios 189-218; "Causa criminal seguido a dos mozos, uno blanco y el otro negro, por habérseles aprehendido con dos botijuelas de aguardiente de caña," Caracas, May 24, 1719, AGN, Comisos, Volume 5, Expediente 2, folios 11-24v.

⁶⁵ "Causa criminal seguida contra Fernando Calanche, Antonio Hernández Camejo y Francisco del Pino por haber vendido en sus tiendas de pulpería aguardiente de caña y aceite introducido de los Reinos de España, sin las marcas correspondientes que expresan las ordenanzas," Caracas, December 18, 1719, AGN, Comisos, Volume 5, Expediente 3, folios 25-48.

instance, Betancourt's men located a still in the Caracas home of Licentiate don Juan Joseph Hidalgo, a priest in Caracas.⁶⁶ Betancourt turned the case over to the bishopric's *juez proveedor vicario* and heard no more about Hidalgo and his still.⁶⁷

Betancourt implemented brash, sweeping policies for coastal transportation and trade that pushed goods and people towards his syndicate. The company tried to monopolize the transport of cacao from coastal valleys to La Guaira, and Betancourt, to facilitate this, restricted coastal shipping to only those vessels that had received his permission.⁶⁸ Like the seal of his approval for merchandise in urban shops and warehouses, this policy gave the governor power to confiscate boats and their cargo without having proof that their owner intended to engage in "comercio ilícito." The objective was to force cacao estate owners and managers to employ Betancourt's allies for coastal shipping. The ban did not apply, however, to Betancourt's cacao from his

⁶⁶ "Causa criminal seguido a dos mozos," folios 16-17v.

⁶⁷ The problem lasted beyond Betancourt's years in office, as both civil and Church officials were well aware of clergy members' participation in the illegal alcohol business. In February of 1726 Governor Portales formally asked Juan Joseph de Escalona y Calatayud, bishop of Caracas, to intervene to have the clergy in Caracas comply with the ban on cane alcohol. "Auto de exhorto, 1726, de Gobernador Portales al señor Doctor Juan Joseph de Escalona y Calatayud, obispo de Caracas, para que los clérigos cumplan con los ordenes contra la producción de aguardiente," Caracas, February 19, 1726, Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Caracas (hereinafter AHAC), Judiciales, Signatura 23-12, folios 1-4. Governor Portales also confronted an extensive smuggling operation that used the home of Licentiate don Antonio Carrera, a Caracas priest, as a base for receiving textiles illegally introduced into the colony at Chuao and for distributing them to Caracas mercaderes. "Comiso hecho en una casa de esta ciudad de unos generillos de ropa ilícita y una bestia mular, pertenecientes a Juan Travieso," Caracas, October 7, 1725, AGN, Comisos, Volume 11, Expediente 6, folios 121-156v; and "Autos hechos sobre la fuga que hizo Juan Travieso y un negro esclavo de don Gerónimo de Lada que estaban presos en uno de los cuartos de las Casas Reales," Caracas, January 16, 1726, AGN, Comisos, Volume 11, Expediente 7, folios 157-162. Crown law prohibited members of the clergy from using their private residences as stores. Nonetheless, priests in Caracas frequently circumvented or flouted this ban by renting rooms in their homes to pulpero friends or family members. Law 82 of the Recopilación de Leyes de Indias, originally passed on May 20, 1635, first stipulated the ban. See Castellanos, *Historia de la pulpería*, p. 55.

⁶⁸ In a correspondence of December 16, 1716, Betancourt informed the Crown that he had banned traffic on secondary routes between Caracas and La Guaira. In Emanuele Amodio, Rodrigo Navarrete Sánchez, and Ana Cristina Rodríguez Yilo, *El Camino de los Españoles: Aproximaciones históricas y arqueológicas al Camino Real Caracas-La Guaira en la época colonial* (Caracas: Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural, 1997), p. 73.

estates in Caravalleda and Caruao, the latter of which, according to Pedro Martín Beato, his associate Juan Carrasco sold to Dutch traders in the port of Chuspa.⁶⁹

The advantage traditionally enjoyed and exercised by the governor in Caracas was to be bolstered by the control over intraprovincial coastal shipping. To put these two pieces together Betancourt needed an enforcer outside of the city. The governor presided over the patrols, collections of taxes and fines, judicial procedures, and auctions in the capital. As his aim was to challenge, debilitate, and eventually subordinate the myriad local and regional smuggling networks that had taken shape over the previous fifty years, he needed someone who was willing and able to extend a unified enforcement strategy across the interior. The *Armada de Barlovento* and corsairs based out of various ports in the Audiencia de Santo Domingo guarded, albeit ineffectively, the coastline and Caribbean Sea from Cumaná to Coro (and across the Caribbean Sea to Cuba and Santo Domingo).⁷⁰ But on land, within the province itself, only the periodic *visitas* performed by governors approximated the scope of this project. And the *visitas* were usually carried out at the beginning of each term or in response to special situations. Betancourt envisioned a province-wide, permanent, and unified system of vigilance and disciplinary action.⁷¹

The position, a chief smuggling officer for the whole colony, was not new. Previous governors had granted wide powers to local officials, often to address acute

⁶⁹ Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe*, Volume 1, p. 191. He cites Pedro Martín Beato's report, "Noticias sobre la visita acordada a la Provincia de Venezuela, en 1720, por el Virrey del Nuevo Reino de Granada, Jorge de Villalonga, visitador Pedro Martín Beato," which Carlos Felice Cardot reproduces partially in his "Noticias sobre la visita acordada a la Provincia de Venezuela," pp. 320ff.

⁷⁰ Jesús Varela Marcos, *Las Salinas de Araya y el origen de la Armada de Barlovento* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1980); Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe*.

⁷¹ Previous efforts, carried out by holders of monopoly trade contracts, did include coastal patrols.

problems that crossed jurisdictional borders.⁷² Governors after Betancourt named their own jueces generales: Diego Portales named don Francisco Esteban de las Mariñas in the mid-1720s, and Lope de Carrillo, who governed from 1728 to 1730, gave this assignment to don Juan Camejo.⁷³ But no one before or after exercised the office with the same ambition and resolve as don Diego de Matos Montañés.

Betancourt in 1716 named Matos his *juez general de comisos* for all the valleys along the coast between La Guaira and Coro.⁷⁴ He received powers to extend his investigations inland, as far as required to counter the smuggling operations he identified. Matos, like Betancourt, was originally from the Canary Islands. He had immigrated to Venezuela some 30 years before the new governor and had lived and traveled widely across the colony. He outlived two creole wives: Juana María Bello, a mulatta with whom he lived in Cerritos de Cocorote; and Juana María de Arteaga, another mulatta, with whom he lived in Capadare, where he had a cacao estate as well as a sugar mill. He bought a *finca* in Comboto during this marriage. The two lived for a time in Guanare.

⁷² For example, Governor Francisco Berroterán named Captain Vicente Machado Fonseca his “juez comisionario contra comercio ilícito.” AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, April 13, 1696, Volume 33, folios 233v-234. Other “comisionarios” appointed by the governor were Pedro Jorge Chavín in 1707, don Amaro Rodríguez Felipe in 1716, and don Joseph de Molina in 1716 as well. Their titles are listed in AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, January 16, 1707, Volume 34, folios 149-149v; October 2, 1716, Volume 38, folios 150-150v; and November 10, 1716, Volume 38, folios 153-154.

⁷³ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, December 18, 1724, Volume 43, folios 169-169v; February 27, 1725, Volume 45, folios 174-174v; and March 8, 1730, Volume 48, folio 196.

⁷⁴ Betancourt named Matos Cabo a Guerra, Superintendente y Juez Superior de Comisos on December 1, 1716. The Caracas cabildo received this appointment on December 22, 1716. Actas del Cabildo de Caracas, unnumbered volume from the years 1716 to 1718, folio 132; Mario Briceño Perozo, “Estudio preliminar,” in Pedro José de Olavarriaga, *Instrucción general y particular del estado presente de la Provincia de Venezuela en los años de 1720 y 1721* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1965), p. 11.

After she died, Matos moved back to Cocorote.⁷⁵ At some point before his appointment, he acquired a 15,000-tree cacao estate in Guaiguaza, which served as his base of operations.⁷⁶ By the time he joined forces with Betancourt, Matos had family, friends, and properties scattered across the province's western districts: in Guaiguaza near Puerto Cabello, on the cacao frontier of Cocorote,⁷⁷ and in the tobacco-growing piedmont of Guanare.

Betancourt's innovative delegation of authority was both the success and downfall of his system. Matos assembled his own personal force that traveled the coast and into the interior, challenging the local smuggling rings that had become entrenched during the War of Spanish Succession. He struck directly or close to municipal elites, since successful smuggling networks included cabildo officers among their most important and influential members. He challenged the cabildos and smugglers who worked with their protection in Valencia, Nirgua, Coro, Barquisimeto, and Guanare.⁷⁸ Matos attracted the wrath of cacao and tobacco producers and smugglers in the interior, who were used to much less intervention on the part of the governor's office. They denounced him for using his office—accusing them of smuggling, arresting individuals, and confiscating their goods, and tying them up in trials in the capital—as a means to bolster his own

⁷⁵ Briceño Perozo, "Estudio preliminar," pp. 11-13.

⁷⁶ Olavarriaga, *Instrucción general y particular*, p. 242.

⁷⁷ Cerritos de Cocorote would become San Felipe in 1730. The founding of the city of San Felipe will be detailed in Chapter 6.

⁷⁸ The conflict with the *alcaldes* of Guanare has received the most attention. In fact, students of this period in colonial Venezuelan history have concentrated almost exclusively on this incident, beginning with Sucre, whose chapter on Betancourt's term is dominated by Matos and the Guanare cabildo. Briceño Perozo's excellent study of the Betancourt years and the Beato and Olavarriaga investigation that followed, as prelude or explanation for the founding of the Guipuzcoa Company, also uses this incident as the central example of the conflict between Betancourt's government and municipal political leadership. Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*, pp. 219-226; Briceño Perozo, "Estudio preliminar," pp. 11-37.

smuggling activities. He used his appointment, in their opinion, to debilitate his competitors.

Matos had other backers besides the governor. This was one reason why Betancourt turned to him for he knew Matos could bring certain resources to his assignment that were beyond what the governor could provide. Matos had arrangements with the English *asiento* factor, Jonathan Sisson, before Betancourt appointed him juez general.⁷⁹ He also had ties with well established merchants on the island of Curaçao.⁸⁰ Matos traded tobacco with the former and cacao with the latter. Matos' friendships and business connections strengthened his hand as juez general, but they also made him a potential liability for the governor. Betancourt, nonetheless, could use these arrangements to undermine his representative, accusing him of smuggling if Matos became too powerful, too independent, or too troublesome. In time he became all of these, and Betancourt, in 1718, distanced himself from Matos, accusing him of abusing his post to gain personal advantage in *comercio ilícito*.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe*, Volume 1, p. 188.

⁸⁰ This was through his business associate Juan (or Jean) Chourio. A subject of the French Crown originally from St. Pierre, Martinique, Chourio was involved in Curaçao's trade with Venezuela and Maracaibo from the years of the War of Spanish Succession through the 1750s. Chourio subcontracted the French *asiento* during the war and later, during the 1720s and 1730s, held his own contract with the Spanish Crown to run supply ships to Maracaibo in exchange for subduing the Perijá Indians and founding a Spanish settlement in their territory. See Hussey, *The Caracas Company*, p. 84; Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe*, Volume 1, 155-158, 188; and "Noticia del estado de la fundación de la Villa de Perijá, en la Provincia de Maracaibo, ofrecida y pactada con el Rey nuestro Señor, por don Juan de Chourio, en cuyo herencia ha entrado don Manuel García de la Peña," Madrid, 1759, in Biblioteca Nacional de Venezuela, Biblioteca Arcaya, Número 10843, 4 folios. For Chourio's substantial debts to Curaçaoan merchants, see Ramón Aizpurua, "Comercio exterior," p. 29; and Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 129-130.

⁸¹ Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe*, Volume 1, pp. 157, 188-189; Briceño Perozo, "Estudio preliminar;" Felice Cardot, "Noticias sobre la visita acordada a la Provincia de Venezuela," pp. 311-337. Matos' ties must be treated with caution, as much of the information about them comes from Betancourt's accusations against him.

In the meantime, while Matos disturbed various patterns of patronage and informal trade that had functioned relatively smoothly, Betancourt performed in Caracas the anti-smuggling duties characteristic of his office, causing little controversy. He gave most attention to transporters in the streets or on the roads leading to Caracas, to people making or selling cane alcohol, and to the pulperos who bought and sold the local *aguardiente*. The governor, like so many others before and after him, used the cane alcohol restrictions to gain access to and pressure Caracas pulperos. He did not leave the *mercaderes* untouched, but the fines they received and confiscations they suffered were more symbolic than anything else.⁸²

Don Diego de Matos Montañés Crosses the Line

Matos upset this balance in Caracas when he brought his heavy-handed approach to the capital. In December 1717, Betancourt traveled to the provincial interior and left Matos in charge of anti-smuggling efforts in Caracas.⁸³ Governors tended to catch smugglers bringing textiles into the city; they usually did not meddle with purchasers and muleteers who left the city with goods acquired from local pulperos and *mercaderes*, since in most cases the adjustment between the shop owner and the governor had already been made. Betancourt followed this practice. The urban *comisos* during his governorship normally involved small loads captured entering Caracas or the perennial cane alcohol bust, which led to further investigations and confiscations at the stores.

⁸² In July of 1717, Betancourt fined 4 *mercaderes* 100 reales each for operating businesses outside of the area established in his *bando*. In March of 1719, he fined Matías Izquierdo and Simón Salafranca 10 pesos each for selling unsealed textiles in their stores. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, July 14, 1717, Volume 38, folios 299-299v; March 14, 1719, Volume 39/40, folios 102v-103.

⁸³ "Autos formados contra don Francisco Corromar, Pedro Cadenas, Francisco Toledo y Juan Fernández Betancourt, *mercaderes* de esta ciudad por habérseles encontrado en sus tiendas géneros sin los sellos correspondientes," Caracas, December 3, 1717, AGN, Volume 3, Expediente 4, folios 239-401.

Matos broke with this trend. Applying the strategy that had brought him success yet made him numerous enemies in the provincial interior, he targeted a major shipment owned by prominent members of a llanero town elite. He then used this confiscation to gain access to the Caracas mercaderes who sold the merchandise to them. He also broke with another trend among governors. Instead of collecting a nominal fee from the mercaderes, which would have served as a friendly reminder to take the juez general into account in the future, he tried to collect as much in confiscations and fines as possible in his brief moment in charge of administering urban commerce. He aimed to deal them a serious blow.

Matos sent a patrol out to the road to the Valleys of Aragua after he heard, he claimed, that some foreign clothing was entering the city by that route. On December 3, 1717, the patrol caught 5 men in Antímano, 2 leagues from Caracas, leaving the city on their way to San Sebastián in the llanos. They were not like the traffickers normally detained on the outskirts of Caracas. Poor mulattoes, free blacks, and Indians, or muleteers hired by coastal smugglers or pulperos in the interior, were the normal catch. These, instead, were cabildo officers and militia members from San Sebastián. Sergeant Antonio Sarrameda and Standard-Bearer Juan Cristóbal Mexía were accompanied by three muleteers named Juan Joseph Pérez, Tomás, and Bonifacio. They had gone to Caracas to buy supplies for, among other things, the upcoming celebrations in San Sebastián in honor of the Virgin.⁸⁴ They had 13 mules loaded with wax, gun powder, clothing, iron tools, tallow, animal fat or butter, among other things. They claimed the clothing was for their families at home. Matos confiscated everything.

⁸⁴ I assume this was for the Día de la Inmaculada Concepción, December 8. Ibid., folios 245v-246, 299.

The textiles they had lacked the necessary seal. Sarrameda and Mexía claimed ignorance of the governor's bandos and the seal policy in Caracas, and they indicated that the mercaderes who sold them the materials gave every indication that the goods were legal. Matos, upon learning this, jumped into action. Between December 3 and 5, 1717, he led inspections in the stores belonging to Francisco Toledo, Juan Fernández Betancourt, Pedro Cadenas, and Francisco Corromar y Campuzano. Matos found some cloth without the required seal on the corner and confiscated their entire inventories.⁸⁵

Betancourt, upon returning to Caracas on Monday, December 6, faced a difficult situation. His representative had applied to Caracas the tactics that had worked for him in places like Nirgua, Valencia, and Barquisimeto. Shortly Matos would move on, just as he did when he challenged local smuggling networks at key points of exchange. But the governor shared Caracas with the mercaderes, as well as the Real Hacienda officers, the Caracas cabildo, and the *mantuano* economic elite. A direct challenge to one of these groups might provide short-term gains, but it was more likely to produce, over the long term, nasty confrontations that would result in more harm than good. Governors Ponte and Cañas took on some Caracas-based mercaderes; for varying reasons, neither remained in the province long after. Betancourt could give his full support to Matos' challenges to cabildo power in the interior, but he did not seek to make enemies of Caracas merchants. The day of his return Betancourt released the men from San Sebastián from jail and gave back the goods they had purchased, excepting the textiles that lacked his seal.⁸⁶ On December 14, he allowed them to return to San Sebastián, now

⁸⁵ Ibid., folios 263, 270, 274.

⁸⁶ Ibid., folio 275. They still had to remain in the city of Caracas.

with everything they purchased.⁸⁷ On January 26, 1718, he put an end to the case, proclaiming some goods from the 4 stores “de buen comiso.” He passed no sentence on the 4 merchants.⁸⁸ The Real Hacienda coffers did eventually receive a substantial sum as a result of this case. Matos had found some fabrics and garment that lacked proof of legal import, and Betancourt could not renege or undermine his juez general’s authority. On Monday, August 22, 1718, the largest of the 4 confiscated lots, the materials from Corromar’s store, were presented for auction on the steps of the Real Contaduría. The sole bidder was don Domingo Rodríguez Tinoco, who paid 535 pesos 7 reales and one-quarter maravedí.⁸⁹

Don Domingo Rodríguez Tinoco and Challenges to the Governor’s Power

Rodríguez Tinoco was the *alcabala* tax farmer for the city of Caracas during Betancourt’s time in Venezuela and through the 1720s.⁹⁰ Pedro Cadenas, one of the merchants persecuted by Matos, claimed Rodríguez Tinoco sold him the wax that he sold

⁸⁷ Ibid., folio 304.

⁸⁸ Ibid., folios 358v-361. Nor does it appear that he imposed the fines required by his own bando of the previous year.

⁸⁹ The Real Hacienda received a total of 449 pesos 5 maravedís. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General, Comisos, August 25, 1718, Volume 39/40, folios 145-145v. It is not clear why no one else made an offer on the auction items. Crown law did not specifically prohibit sale to a single bidder, but such was not the intent of the public auctions. The Crown banned Real Hacienda officers from buying at royal treasury auctions or having representatives buy for them. In general, colonial officials in Caracas, La Guaira, and Puerto Cabello—the three official sites for comisos auctions in Venezuela—refrained from violating these restrictions. Other restrictions, such as those against under- or overpricing items, were less closely followed. Auctions in settlements in the interior, especially small isolated ones, were very different, as local authorities applied Crown law with greater flexibility. The Crown directed that auctions be held in the provincial capital or, after 1730, in La Guaira or Puerto Cabello.

⁹⁰ Rodríguez Tinoco, as *arrendador* of the Caracas *alcabala*, enjoyed the rights to collect the tax yet in practice supervised the activity. After he secured from the royal treasury officers the rights to collect, he turned around and leased them to Juan del Rosal, who did the actual tax collection. “Sobre el estado de tiendas en casas particulares sin licencia correspondiente,” AGN, Diversos, Caracas, December 5, 1718, Volume 8, Expediente 4, folios 210-213.

to the men from San Sebastián.⁹¹ Rodríguez Tinoco, like the governor, seems to have used his Crown concession, which he had to secure through advanced payment, to obtain valuable goods and sell them at an advantage in Caracas. In this he rivaled the governor.⁹² He did not have the same connections or access to goods at their point of entry. He did, as sales tax collector, have similar access to the places goods were sold and stored. If Rodríguez Tinoco's exclusive access to Corromar's impounded textiles is an indication of some sort of working arrangement he had with the governor, by the end of Betancourt's term, in 1720, this had fallen apart. Betancourt took the conventional steps to eliminating or, at best, temporarily neutralize Rodríguez Tinoco. He accused him of being a *contrabandista*.

The governor brought charges against the arrendador and his business associates in August 1720.⁹³ In late June or early July of the same year, they purchased 70 fanegas of cacao from the Obra Pía de Chuao. Betancourt received word that 4 Dutch vessels were anchored at Chuao at the time of the purchase, and he used this information as grounds for claiming that Rodríguez Tinoco and his two partners planned to sell the cacao to foreign traders.⁹⁴ Arrested on Monday, August 7, 1719, Rodríguez Tinoco languished in the Caracas jail for the rest of Betancourt's term in office. The governor, who had only

⁹¹ "Autos formados contra don Francisco Corromar," folio 255.

⁹² Others in the capital who could and sometimes did use their positions in colonial government to secure personal or extra-legal advantages included the cabildo officers, the royal treasury officers, the commander of the presidio at La Guaira, the bishop, and beginning in the 1730s, the Guipuzcoa Company factor, to name a few.

⁹³ "Autos hechos contra Domingo Rodríguez Tinoco, don Francisco Vasconcelos y don Andrés de Ponte sobre comercio de extranjería," Caracas and Turmero, August 7, 1720, AGN, Gobernación y Capitanía General, Volume 2, Expediente 3, folios 64-115.

⁹⁴ It was common for civil authorities to level accusations of smuggling against this Church estate. See Arcila Fariás et al., *La Obra Pía de Chuao*, especially pp. 80, 101, 103.

the slightest evidence against the tax collector, took no action in the case: he neglected to take Rodríguez Tinoco's confession, confiscate his personal possessions, or collect evidence against him. Since the governor in his role as investigating judge compiled no *autos*, Rodríguez Tinoco could prepare no defense.⁹⁵ Betancourt managed to keep his rival from supervising tax collection by refusing to consider his requests to be released on bail.

By this time Betancourt had also broken with his confidant and enforcer, Diego de Matos. Betancourt had had to cover for him and at the same time ease the tensions he created with Caracas mercaderes. Nonetheless, complaints against the juez general were mounting. In addition to the alcaldes of Guanare, the cabildo officers of Valencia and the justice of the peace of Nirgua, Juan de la Rocha, lodged complaints against Matos. Betancourt, under pressure from both within and outside of Caracas, agreed to name a special commissioner to investigate Matos' anti-smuggling efforts to determine if he had surpassed or abused his authority. The governor in June of 1718 named don Mateo de Osorio, a vecino of Valencia who at the time served as the juez de comisos for Morón and Agua Caliente.⁹⁶ Osorio traveled between Valencia, Nirgua, and Barquisimeto and collected from enthusiastic local officials and residents damning testimony against Matos and his crew of smugglers and enforcers. Also by this time, Matos was beginning to feel the negative repercussions of one of his boldest feats. In May of 1717, Benito de la Calle, one of his sergeants, led his motley informal army in storming a Dutch ship

⁹⁵ The accused was allowed to prepare his or her defense once the prosecutor's formal accusations were received. Without the *autos*, all subsequent stages in the judicial procedure were put on hold.

⁹⁶ Briceño Perozo, "Estudio preliminar," pp. 23-33. Osorio's experience with nirgüño district official and smugglers is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 on Nirgua.

anchored at Puerto Cabello. With the loot they removed themselves to Matos' cacao estate in Guaiguaza, from where they distributed portions to their friends, collaborators, and local allies. They did not share the wealth with either the governor or the Valencia cabildo members.

In November of 1718, Governor Betancourt ordered Matos' arrest and the confiscation of his personal property. Matos, for his part, avoided facing his former associate turned prosecuting judge by taking refuge first in the Franciscan convent in Valencia and then in the Dominican convent in the capital. From Caracas he fled to Bogotá, in hopes of catching the ear of the newly appointed viceroy before Betancourt could give his version through official correspondence.⁹⁷

Venezuela's Subordination to the Viceroyalty of New Granada

In 1718 executive authority over the province of Venezuela was transferred from the Audiencia de Santo Domingo to the Viceroyalty of New Granada, newly created by the Crown. The viceroy lost little time in extending Bogotá's judicial authority over Venezuela. In 1720 Jorge de Villalonga sent two *jueces comisionarios* to Caracas to investigate and suppress what was reported to be widespread smuggling in the province.

Pedro Martín Beato and Pedro José de Olavarriaga, the investigative judges sent to the province by Viceroy Villalonga, were in Venezuela from March through December of 1721.⁹⁸ Olavarriaga spent this time outside of Caracas, surveying the province's coastal valleys, cataloging their cacao estates, and collecting the data for his *Instrucción general*. Beato concentrated on the capital. He patrolled its street and stores, guarding against

⁹⁷ This discussion of Betancourt and Matos' fallout is based on Briceño Perozo, "Estudio preliminar," pp. 23-83.

⁹⁸ For the Beato and Olavarriaga investigation in Venezuela, see *Ibid.*; and Felice Cardot, "Noticias sobre la visita acordada a la Provincia de Venezuela."

suspicious activities. In July Beato turned his attention to Rodríguez Tinoco's case and was immediately bothered by the paltry evidence Betancourt used to charge Rodríguez Tinoco and the unorthodox manner in which the governor pursued the charges against him. Beato could not simply drop the case against Rodríguez Tinoco; yet by reopening it, he pushed it towards a speedy conclusion. On August 24, a month after taking the case, Beato sentenced Rodríguez, along with his absent codefendants, to pay the costs of the judicial proceedings.⁹⁹

The two men came to terms before Beato closed the case against Rodríguez Tinoco. The suspicious auction sale to a single bidder, seen in the case Matos brought against the 4 Caracas merchants, although common in the province during this time, became blatant in the brief period Beato and Olavarría administered the province.¹⁰⁰ On July 15, 1721, Rodríguez Tinoco paid 114 pesos 22 reales for 203 and one-quarter *varas* of unbleached linen.¹⁰¹ On August 11, 1721, Beato, accompanied by his guards, raided the homes of two merchants from the Canary Islands. The judge confiscated materials they had brought into the province on a registry ship from the islands. On August 21, 1721, Beato

⁹⁹ These totaled 51 pesos 5 reales 5 maravedís. "Autos hechos contra Domingo Rodríguez Tinoco," folios 114-115.

¹⁰⁰ Actually, the sale to Rodríguez Tinoco was not the only time one person bid on a *comisos* auction during Betancourt's time in office. On July 8, 1719, Captain Gregorio de Liendo purchased the 41 head of cattle that Ayudante Tomás Álvarez had captured entering Caracas from Macarao without the proper license. "Diligencias instruidas por ante el Gobernador y Capitán General de Caracas, dando comisión al Ayudante Tomás Álvarez para que pase al Valle de Macarao y embargue cualesquiera puntas de ganado que por allí se introducen sin la licencia correspondiente, lo demás que se ordena en el Bando de Buen Gobierno a este respecto," Caracas, July 7, 1719, AGN, Comisos, Volume 5, Expediente 1, folios 1-10.

¹⁰¹ Beato made the arrest on the night of April 29, 1721; Governor Antonio José Álvarez de Abreu declared the materials a *buen comiso* and ordered their sale at public auction. The bolts were assessed at 4 reales per *vara*, and Rodríguez Tinoco offered 4.5 reales. "Autos hechos contra Ignacio Lavado and Teniente Alexandro Cory de nación inglesa, sobre la aprehensión de siete media piezas de crudo de extranjería," Caracas, April 30, 1721, AGN, Comisos, Volume 5, Expediente 11, folios 395-433v. The auction can be found on folios 430v-433.

sold these to don Pedro de Echeverría, the registry ship captain who transported the very same materials across the Atlantic.¹⁰² Echeverría then gave them back to the two merchants. On September 3, 1721, Rodríguez repeated as sole bidder. Beato received word from a spy that store owners in Caracas were selling contraband. The judge toured the pulperías and found in Joseph Núñez's shop some black taffeta. Núñez pleaded both his innocence and ignorance, claiming he bought the materials from don Clemente González Martín, who had purchased it from a registry ship from the Canary Islands. He also claimed he did not know the taffeta was proscribed. Beato declared the goods a legitimate confiscation and assigned his regular assessors, Juan Crisóstomo Saavedra and Bartolomé Sánchez, to price the textiles. Rodríguez paid the price they set—8 reales per vara.¹⁰³ In a fourth auction, don Francisco Salazar, vecino of Caracas, purchased on October 13, 1721, the Chinese silks Beato had taken from Mateo Rollano's house a week earlier.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Echeverría promised to pay 2057 pesos 2 reales within a month. "Testimonio de los autos instruidos por don Pedro Martín Beato, Comisionado del Virrey y Gobernador del Reino de Granada, contra Gregorio Marante y Francisco López, por habérseles aprehendido diferentes géneros de lo prohibido, provenientes de las Islas Canarias," Caracas, May 19, 1723, AGN, Comisos, Volume 7, Expediente 3, folios 170-204. The auction can be found on folios 184-187.

¹⁰³ "Autos sobre haberse aprehendido a José Núñez treinta varas y media de tafetán doble procedente de Islas, en su tienda de mercancías," Caracas, August 11, 1721, Comisos, Volume 5, Expediente 6, folios 88-98v.

¹⁰⁴ Beato put up for auction 7 complete pieces of serge, or *rasillo*, and 15 varas of cuttings. Rollano brought the textiles into the province on Captain don Vicente de Osia's ship, which plied the La Guaira-Veracruz trade route. Rollano claimed he was unaware Chinese textiles were not allowed in Venezuela. Salazar paid 148 pesos 1 real for the load. Of this money, Beato gave 45 pesos to the spy who informed him. "Autos instruidos por don Pedro Martín Beato, comisionado del Virrey del Nuevo Reino de Granada, contra Mateo Rollano, por habérsele encontrado cantidad de rasillo de China en su tienda que tiene establecida en esta ciudad," Caracas, October 6, 1721, AGN, Comisos, Volume 5, Expediente 7, folios 100-108v.

The Governorship of Venezuela after Betancourt

Betancourt's time in office represents the peak of futura-based governorships. The two governors who followed him, Diego Portales y Meneses and Lope Carrillo de Andrade Sotomayor y Pimentel, each made the donation to secure the post, but Crown policy on the province shifted during their time in office. They in turn adjusted the role of governor. After Betancourt, no more governors owned or operated their own stores. Some surely had an interest in or favored some businesses over others, but with the founding of the Guipuzcoa Company the governor's commercial interests became those of the monopoly trade company, especially in the 1730s and 1740s, when governors were in effect company men. Also, after Betancourt governors ceased to patrol the streets and stores of Caracas in person. Betancourt began the trend by expanding patrols in the area and delegating more arrest authority to local military officials. He was the last governor to carry out personally a comiso confiscation in the city of Caracas.¹⁰⁵ For the rest of the province, Betancourt's appointment of Matos also hinted at things to come, although Matos' failures taught future colonial officers, in and outside of Caracas, important lessons. The Crown, beginning with the integration of Venezuela to the Viceroyalty of New Granada, sought tighter control over the province. Specifically, it aimed to wrest the coastal trade from the Dutch as well as reduce the share of the cacao trade enjoyed by New Spain. Beato and Olavarriaga's visit to the province and their respective reports helped focus Crown and viceregal attention on the coastal valleys outside of Caracas, especially down the coast to the west—the stretch between Chuao and Tucacas. The struggle over smuggling shifted away from the capital and the central coast. And while

¹⁰⁵ Beato personally led patrols and carried out arrests, but his role in Caracas was different from that of a permanent governor.

the governor and later the Guipuzcoa Company concentrated their efforts on this area, neither implemented a unified terrestrial strategy to counter the trade with the Dutch. The company managed extensive vigilance of the province's coast with its sea patrols but besides the short-lived patrols in Barlovento, implemented nothing on land that matched this. Governor Portales took the struggle over smuggling out of Caracas and into the coastal and interior valleys where cacao and tobacco were traded. Comisos arrests and confiscations jumped during the 1720s, the decade when Portales was in and out of office, but not as a result of greater activity in Caracas.¹⁰⁶ Portales increased the number of justices of the peace, assigning more *tenientes* to more places than any previous governor. They did not coordinate their actions, nor were the protests against them unified attacks against the office. As the justice of the peace integrated his interests with some if not all local interests, many powerful individuals in places like Valencia, Nirgua, and San Felipe welcomed the governor's representative and defended his authority.

In Caracas the governor also settled into the selective persecution of extra-legal trade and transport. Military strategy and the protection of the company's commercial monopoly guided Crown appointments. The candidates, for their part, no longer had to pay the *futura*, although they still incurred considerable debt and had pressing personal and business obligations. Before 1730 they fulfilled these creatively, often along the margins of colonial law; after 1730 they had in the RCG an institutional framework within which they could place members of their retinue, thus making nepotism or partisanship more difficult to distinguish from Crown service. They did not have to find

¹⁰⁶ From 1710 to 1719, there were 93 total *comisos* deposits in the Real Hacienda account books. The decade total for the 1720s was 169, 25% of all *comisos* deposits (680) during the years 1693 through 1756. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, *Comisos*, Volume 33-63A.

or create posts for their family and friends since they could insert them into existing and expanding political and commercial institutions—either as justices of the peace or in the Guipuzcoa Company. Also, the major conflicts over smuggling did not directly involve Caracas. Caracas residents had stakes in their outcome, of course, as many members of the creole elite and the colonial bureaucracy owned or had shares in cacao estates along the coast. Nonetheless, the fights between influential individuals and groups in Caracas were not direct confrontations, as they were fought elsewhere by others, usually subordinates. In the city itself governors concentrated anti-smuggling activities on undeclared cattle brought from outlying areas nearby like Macarao and from more distant *hatos* in the llanos; on cane alcohol; and on the periodic inventory and confiscation of undeclared or illegal textiles in Caracas retail stores. The conflict with the secular clergy in Caracas flared up intermittently without any clear resolution.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

Betancourt was a harbinger. Governors after him followed his lead by functioning as the delegating governor who coordinated, but did not personally direct, *comisos* operations. *Comisos* arrests increased, as did the number of people involved in the official anti-smuggling efforts. The governor for his part settled into the role of *comisos* judge, allowing his representatives in the urban patrols in Caracas, the military command at La Guaira, or the justices of the peace in the provincial interior to collect the share of *comisos* set aside for the captor. One result was that while *comisos* patrols and arrests

¹⁰⁷ For example, "Autos hechos sobre la fuga que hizo Juan Travieso y un negro esclavo de don Gerónimo de Lada que estaban presos en uno de los cuartos de las Casas Reales," Caracas, January 16, 1726, AGN, *Comisos*, Volume 11, Expediente 7, folios 157-162; "Auto de exhorto, 1726, de Gobernador Portales al señor Doctor Juan Joseph de Escalona y Calatayud, obispo de Caracas, para que los clérigos cumplan con los órdenes contra la producción de aguardiente," Caracas, February 19, 1726, AHAC, *Judiciales*, Signatura 23-12, folios 1-4; "Causa contra Domingo Fernández, por alambique en su casa," Caracas, May 16, 1737, AGN, *Comisos*, Volume 17, Expediente 9, folios 200-234v.

increasingly occurred away from the capital, other steps in the *comisos* process became more concentrated there.

Caracas had for most of the eighteenth century the only relatively effective jail.¹⁰⁸ The only other site in the province that could effectively hold prisoners was not even on land. The Guipuzcoa Company's frigates in Puerto Cabello were frequently used to hold prisoners until they could be safely transferred to Caracas. Most steps in the *comisos* process took place in Caracas: the trial, the storage, official inventory, assessment, and auction of confiscated goods, the deposit of fines and auction monies. As the province's economy expanded and smuggling arrests increased, each of these steps expanded in activity but did not necessarily incorporate greater numbers of people. Unlike *comisos* patrols along the coast or in the interior valleys, which though impermanent employed many and saw a high turnover over time, some of these urban procedures became monopolized by a handful of individuals.

By the outbreak of the War of Jenkins' Ear, smuggling and anti-smuggling in Caracas took three general forms. The first and third grew in volume over the course of the century, though the number of people involved did not necessarily expand. The second held steady over these same years. First, the recurring, quiet tax evasion that took place at La Guaira continued and expanded as transatlantic trade, thanks in part to the RCG, expanded. Most of these products found their way into shops and homes in Caracas without provoking much response from colonial officials except for the steady deposit of informal taxes and fees in the Real Hacienda *comisos* coffers. Second, the periodic detention of individuals transporting illegally imported goods into Caracas,

¹⁰⁸ Relatively effective because the royal jail in Caracas, which was a well guarded room or two in the Casas Reales, had its share of breakouts, escapes, and easily bribed guards.

either from Aragua to the west or Higuerote to the east, was combined with regular visits and irregular raids on pulperías in town to eliminate unaccounted for smugglers, usually operating on the street, and to remind the pulperos of the local authority. Third, the bureaucracy and service activities involved in prosecuting comisos cases, most of them originating outside of the capital, expanded, though in some sectors, official and unofficial monopolies reserved the fruits of these services to a limited number of people.

The governors of Venezuela in the early eighteenth century aimed for vertical and horizontal control over legal and extra-legal trade, but the limits on their ability to impose both Crown policy and personal interests obliged them to settle for what influence they could secure. This normally meant that they wielded considerable clout in the city of Caracas and had diminished power outside of the provincial capital. Governor Marcos de Betancourt altered this pattern in his efforts to combine the governor's privileged position in the city with an integrated enforcement policy for the provincial interior. Though short lived, Betancourt's governorship marked the height of efforts to control legal and extra-legal trade through personal, informal ties and obligations. After his term in office, the Crown moved the province towards more formal mechanisms for securing commercial advantage. The founding of the Royal Guipuzcoa Company in 1730 solidified this change. While the company consolidated institutional control over trade through the province's main ports, it did not have the strength to undermine regionally and informally based trading systems. Rather, the company often settled for partial articulation with these local networks. Official repression of smuggling in the provincial interior was fragmented, never approaching the integration briefly achieved by Betancourt and his associates.

CHAPTER 4
GEOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION AND THE TOBACCO
TRADE IN VALENCIA

Porque si fuera mi pariente mayormente tan inmediato como se supone, no es verosímil lo ocupase en un ministerio de tan poca estimación.

—Joseph Luis Felipes¹

Valencia, Caracas' neighbor to the west, was founded twelve years before the provincial capital. In 1555 the Spanish Crown approved the incorporation of the city of Nueva Valencia del Rey and recognized its municipal council. No major institutional change took place in the district until the eighteenth century. For roughly one-hundred years from the city's founding, pirate raids on Borburata and other ports constituted the Crown's greatest concern. Nonetheless, the royal neglect enjoyed by Valencia's residents and its cabildo officers began to give way by the end of the seventeenth century, as the development of the district's cacao economy in response to European and Mexican demand for the fruit drew the attention of colonial officials in Caracas and their superiors in Spain. Beginning in 1675 the governors in Caracas sought to name justices of the peace to serve in the jurisdiction and restrict the until-then unchecked capacities of the Valencia cabildo.² Lasting institutional reform came fifty years later: Governor Diego Portales succeeded in making the justice of the peace permanent in Valencia, and in 1728

¹ Joseph Luis Felipes, in his written defense in "Segundo cuaderno de los autos que se están siguiendo en el Tribunal Supremo contra don Joseph Luis Felipes y don Ignacio de Goya," AANH, RP, Tomo 383, Signatura 2-383-1, folio 157. In English: "Because if he were such a close relative as it is supposed, it would be implausible for me to assign him a position of such low standing."

² AGN, Reales Provisiones, Volume 1, Provisión #2, August 29, 1675, folios 8v-11.

the Spanish Crown granted monopoly trade privileges to the RCG. The company recognized the advantages of the natural harbor at Puerto Cabello and made the port one of its central commercial and military facilities. The new political and commercial authorities—the justices of the peace and the RCG—were layered onto long-established structures and patterns of transportation, communication, and trade, as well as over centuries-old political institutions. The Valencia political elite, nonetheless, did not reject the justices of the peace or the company as may have been expected and as did happen in neighboring jurisdictions.

Justices of the peace challenged cabildo power because they threatened to break what had been in many places for many years a monopoly on the exercise of formal political power. Cabildos were the basic political unit of municipal government in Spanish America, although the councils did not represent all residents of their respective municipalities. They represent the *vecinos*, the property-holding local inhabitants who enjoyed the right to vote for cabildo members and who could participate in *cabildo abiertos*, the infrequent meetings open to all *vecinos*. Officially the Crown assigned cabildos authority over local issues such as the regulation prices, weights, and measures, the distribution of municipal lands, the collection of municipal taxes, the issuance of building permits, the control of local water sources, and some control over police matters. In practice many cabildos, Valencia's included, exercised political authority over many areas that were legally the domain of the Crown's direct representatives, including judicial, military, and financial duties. This is because the cabildos were, until the early eighteenth century, the only formal political institutions in many parts of Venezuela.³

³ Ramón Aizpurua, "Municipios: Siglos: XVI-XVIII," in Manuel Pérez Vila, ed., *Diccionario de historia de Venezuela*, volume 2 (Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1988), pp. 1031-1036; and Ermila Troconis de

In strict legal terms a new justices of the peace named by the governor to serve in a city, villa, or town in Venezuela did not challenge cabildo power, but in practice the governor's representative presented a very serious challenge. Governors appointed justices of the peace to serve in formal settlements as well as in valleys, usually along the coast. Creoles received three-year assignments; peninsulares received five-year posts. Their duties were administrative, judicial, military, and fiscal. They were to administer those areas not specifically assigned to the cabildo, adjudicate disputes and try criminals, direct the local militias, and collect royal taxes. They also presided over cabildo meetings. Governors could also expand their responsibilities by assigning them further titles beyond *teniente de justicia mayor*. These included *juez de comisos*, *juez de llanos*, *comandante de comandante de milicias urbanas*, *corregidor*, and *cabo de guerra*. They were then allowed to name assistants to help them in specific locales.⁴

The reasons for the lack of open tension between the Valencia cabildo and the governors' representatives are various. Unlike the Caracas cabildo, which repeatedly petitioned the Crown to repeal the RCG's privileges and supported Juan Francisco de León's mid-eighteenth-century campaign to remove the company from the province, the Valencia cabildo found some advantage in the RCG's presence in Puerto Cabello. Valencia's producers and smugglers lost Puerto Cabello as a center for trading with the Dutch but gained a consistent buyer. Excluded from the lucrative trade with New Spain,

Veracoechea, "Régimen español," in Manuel Pérez Vila, ed., *Diccionario de historia de Venezuela*, second edition, volume 3 (Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1997 [1988]), p. 853.

⁴ Gilberto Quintero, *El teniente justicia mayor en la administración colonial venezolana: Aproximación a su estudio histórico jurídico* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1996), pp. 221-245; and Ermila Troconis de Veracoechea, "Régimen español," p. 852. Both Quintero and Troconis de Veracoechea compare the *teniente de justicia mayor* with the *corregidor* and *alcalde mayor* elsewhere in colonial Spanish America.

Valencia's cacao producers were much more willing to see the RCG impose itself than the Caracas mantuanos. The company bought their cacao and during its first few decades, did not seriously challenge Valencia's extra-legal tobacco trade. The justices of the peace did not face the kind of opposition from Valencia's cabildo officers that their counterparts in Nirgua confronted in part because of rifts within the Valencia political elite, division that the justices of the peace were able to exploit.⁵ The district's fragmented geography made difficult effective, district-wide control by any of the three institutions. On top of this, while the RCG struggled to impose its authority on the various finger valleys and the smuggling of cacao that went on in each, the old and new political authorities based in the interior valley concentrated on Valencia's second export trade, the extra-legal exchange of tobacco, which escaped the company's attention for nearly twenty years. The RCG concentrated on its operations out of Puerto Cabello, the cabildo officers and their cohorts took advantage of the company's offers and at the same time pushed to expand their power in the tobacco trade, and the justices of the peace tried to push in on this last activity using the little control over coastal trade that they could muster.

Valencia's geographic fragmentation was mirrored by its political fragmentation. The coastal range, which rises up at the Nirgua-Valencia border and extends to Barlovento on Caracas' eastern edge, splits the narrow valleys that open on the Caribbean Sea from Valencia's interior mountain valleys. In the eighteenth century the jurisdiction extended north to the sea, south to the llanos villa of San Luis de Cura, east to the border

⁵ The conflicts between the Nirgua cabildo and the governors' representatives will be discussed in the next chapter.

with Caracas marked by Choroni on the coast and Turmero in the interior, and west to the Sanchón River on the coast and the villa of San Carlos in the llanos (see Figure 4).

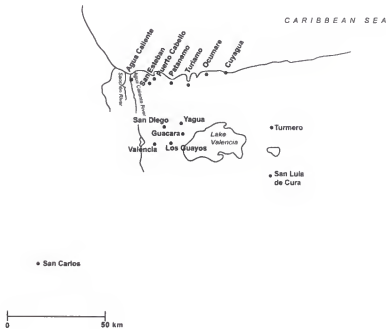


Figure 4. The District of Valencia

Like its immediate neighbors Caracas and Nirgua, Valencia administered coast, highland interior valleys, and llanos. Like Caracas and unlike Nirgua, Valencia had multiple, discrete, narrow, and fairly isolated valleys along the coast, as well as a more densely populated interior. Besides the city of Valencia, which in the mid-eighteenth century had between 6000 and 7000 inhabitants, the surrounding area included three Indian pueblos—Guacara, San Diego, and Los Guayos—and a population of peninsulares, especially immigrants from the Canary Islands, and creoles in rural areas.

In addition to the plantations that extended up the narrow coastal valleys, Valencia's Caribbean coast included the province's best natural port. Puerto Cabello and La Guaira were Venezuela's two approved ports of call. All authorized ships, travelers, and goods that entered and exited the province had to do so through one of these two places. The Guipuzcoa Company made Puerto Cabello a center for its commercial and military operations.⁶ In the 1730s the expanding trade as well as the construction of military, administrative, and commercial facilities in the port spurred the rapid expansion of Puerto Cabello's population. Some were attracted by the economic activity; others were forced into it.⁷ Cisneros, in his 1764 report on the province, calculated the annual trade in "géneros ordinarios" through Puerto Cabello at 15,000 to 16,000 pesos annually.⁸

Valencia's export economy revolved around cacao and tobacco. The cacao was grown in Valencia's coastal valleys, where it was also dried and prepared for export. Coastal boats and launches then took the fruit to Puerto Cabello or La Guaira. Or producers and traders simply awaited the arrival of Dutch sloop captains who traded directly. The second major export, tobacco, was not produced locally. Two types of tobacco circulated in eighteenth-century Venezuela: *tabaco de cura seca* and *tabaco de*

⁶ The legal status of trade through Puerto Cabello—what could be traded, who could trade, where could ships come from and go—was never as clear as it was for La Guaira, at least until the RCG set up operations there. See Aizpurua, "Comercio exterior," pp. 23-42.

⁷ Puerto Cabello had been founded the same year as La Guaira—1589—but its natural port and harbor were not fully appreciated or exploited because transatlantic and intercolonial trade was, until the 1730s, required to pass through the province's monopoly port, La Guaira. It was said that the waters in Puerto Cabello were so calm that sailors could tie off their ships with a hair. There is, however, a conflicting story that explains the origins of the port's name. One of the first smugglers who set up and used the port as base was named Cabello. Angel de Altolaquirre y Duvale, ed., *Relaciones geográficas de la Gobernación de Venezuela (1767-1768)* (Madrid: Imprenta del Patronato de Huérfanos de Administración Militar, 1908), p. 36, fn 1.

⁸ Cisneros, *Descripción exacta*, p. 141.

cura negra.⁹ The first, grown in the llanos' piedmont in places like Guanare, Barinas, and southeastern Mérida, was the export crop.¹⁰ Cura seca tobacco passed through Valencia on its way to the formal ports of San Felipe, Puerto Cabello, and La Guaira and to the informal ones that dotted the coastline under Valencia's jurisdiction. The RCG had in the three formal ports warehouses and commercial agents assigned to the tobacco trade. Tabaco de cura negra, in contrast, was grown locally for local consumption.

Besides chewing tobacco, the jurisdiction produced a variety of agricultural crops for internal consumption, especially on the lands surrounding Lake Valencia. Valencia's main body of water yielded fish, which was eaten locally and sent to settlements around the jurisdiction.¹¹ The lake's largest island, Caratapona, had gardens along its south side, where local residents grew plantains, corn, tobacco, and melons and sent them across the lake to the Valencia market.¹² Spaniards, creoles, and Indians also reclaimed the lake bed, increasingly exposed as settlements grew and the waters receded over the course of the eighteenth century.¹³

The previous chapter reveals how the province's maximum colonial authority, the governor, over time concentrated on the capital of Caracas. A main reason for this was the diversification and expansion of commercial and bureaucratic institutions and

⁹ For the little that is known about tobacco production and consumption in colonial Venezuela, see Arcila Fariás, *Historia de un monopolio*; Ramón Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 75-84. For the extra-legal export of the weed, see Aizpurua's *Temas de historia colonial de Venezuela y del Caribe* and Klooster's *Illicit Riches*.

¹⁰ This piedmont was the transition area between the northeastern fork of the Andes and the llanos.

¹¹ Fish from El Pao was also brought into the area. See Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, p. 118.

¹² Altolaguirre y Duvalé, *Relaciones geográficas*, p. 36.

¹³ Octabio Jelambi, *Cuatrocientos cuarenta y siete años del Lago de Valencia* (Caracas: Academia de Ciencias Físicas, Matemáticas y Naturales, 1995).

activities in the city. Valencia, in contrast, offered few urban opportunities and as a result the members of Valencia political elite spent long periods of time in the countryside or along the coast. Many owned cacao plantations in the jurisdiction's coastal valleys, especially in San Esteban, Guaiguaza, Turiamo, and Patanemo. Also, mayors often carried out criminal investigations, led searches for fugitives, and intervened in disputes between colonial officials, either by the governors' request or on their own initiative. Valencia's many colonial authorities, which included the RCG officers at Puerto Cabello, the justice of the peace and his various subordinates, the corregidores of the Indian towns, and the cabildo officers, jostled with each other for advantage. At times the governor had to ask one to intervene to check the pretensions or excesses of another.

Transport between Valencia's interior valleys and its legal and extra-legal coastal ports generally followed two routes. The first joined the city of Valencia with Puerto Cabello by way of the Valley of Agua Caliente, along Valencia's western border with Nirgua. The second joined the local capital and the coast by a more circuitous route, through Yagua on the south side of the coastal range and Patanemo and Turiamo on the coast.

Merchants, traders, and muleteers who transported goods within or across Valencia were expected, by the governor, the cabildo, and beginning in 1730, by the RCG, to use the Agua Caliente route to get to and from the coast. The valley and the river of the same name opened to the sea just west of Puerto Cabello. Those traveling inland from Puerto Cabello were required to obtain from the commander of the San Felipe fort written permission, which was to be presented to the Valencia justice of the peace, the municipal mayor, or whomever was in charge of regulating commerce and transportation in

Valencia at the moment. There they were to obtain another permission, this one to travel east, south, or west from Valencia.

Puerto Cabello

The concentration of official commercial institutions, military installations, and, beginning in 1730 the Guipuzcoa Company, kept the port of Puerto Cabello comparatively clear of direct interactions between Venezuelan colonial subjects and Dutch traders. The Dutch swung wide of the port when they cruised the Caracas coast; smugglers who worked the littoral and those coming from the interior did likewise, skirting the port once they came into the vicinity. Yet proximity to the busy port was also an advantage for planning and executing clandestine exchanges elsewhere along the coast. Permanent residents, seasonal workers, and people in transit, for legitimate or other reasons, could keep track of corsair movement, the entries and exits of commercial and military ships in the port, the deployment of patrols along the coast, and terrestrial shipments of cacao from neighboring valleys or tobacco and hides from the interior. Only in the rarest instances were smuggling activities in Puerto Cabello exposed. The port's immediate hinterland, which included some of Valencia's major cacao-producing valleys, was relatively quiet, especially when considered in comparison with Morón to the west and other Valencia coastal valleys to the east, like Turiamo, Ocumare, and Cuyagua.¹⁴ The valleys and settlements of Guaiguaza, San Esteban, and Borburata were not left out of smuggling networks, however. They served as central locations for meeting associates, planning activities, storing exports, and distributing imports.

¹⁴ Morón will be discussed in detail in the following chapter on Nirgua. See below for more on Turiamo, Ocumare, and Cuyagua.

Official records show very little violation of commercial policy at the port. Only the most securely established and protected individuals dared to trade with the Dutch directly from Puerto Cabello. The Real Hacienda account books and the criminal record of smuggling violations reflect this pattern in the dearth of Puerto Cabello entries.

Granted, the company was not above underreporting, incorrectly weighing, or misplacing cargo, nor were its employees above stealing company goods or smuggling under its protection. In fact, by the 1770s, colonial officials and residents leveled regular accusations against the company for trading directly with the Dutch.¹⁵ But since the company's monopoly over intercolonial trade made it shipper, merchant, regulator, and military guardian of its own commercial enterprise, violations that occurred within company activities were not as likely to leak out to colonial officials or produce criminal proceedings. This accounts in part for the paucity of comisos entries from Puerto Cabello.

The Real Hacienda and Comisos records indicate a similar pattern in the years before the company's presence. Of the 5 comisos deposits recorded in the Real Hacienda books from 1693 to 1756, two date from the period of RCG monopoly. Of these two, the second, from 1747, did not occur in the port or harbor. Instead, Puerto Cabello's military commander at the time, don Manuel de Agreda, captured a fishing canoe loaded with textiles and tools in the mangroves just east of the port.¹⁶ This case, discussed further

¹⁵ In the last years of its contract, the company was probably the biggest trader with the Dutch. In this, it fell well into the characteristic pattern of anti-smuggling efforts in Venezuela in the eighteenth century. The point was not to eliminate extra-legal trade but to eliminate rivals in the trade. See Hussey, *The Caracas Company*, pp. 268-269; and Aizpurua, "Algunas consideraciones en torno a la Real Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas," in his *Temas de historia de Venezuela y del Caribe*, pp. 121-125.

¹⁶ The goods were auctioned in Puerto Cabello, with textiles selling for 1200 pesos and the canoe and tools for 129 pesos. Agreda submitted 810 pesos 5 reales to the royal exchequer in Caracas. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volume 58, September 27, 1747, folios 165-165v.

below, represents well the kind of smuggling that was most common in the Puerto Cabello area.

The criminal record of contraband cases, or *Comisos*, reflects the same pattern as the royal account books. The catalog of criminal investigations includes only 2 incidents from the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1718, don Diego de Matos, Governor Betancourt's general *comisos* officer for the province of Venezuela, and others overpowered the crew of a Dutch ship that had pulled into the Puerto Cabello harbor and absconded with its entire cargo. The attack generated investigations in Puerto Cabello, Guaiguaza, San Esteban, Valencia, and beyond, as Pedro José de Olavarriaga and Pedro Martín Beato, the investigative judge sent by the New Granadian viceroy to Venezuela, traced the trail of Matos' clients, allies, and cohorts across the province.¹⁷

In the second case, which dates from 1740, an artilleryman from Fort San Felipe accused three of his superior officers of masterminding an exchange with the Dutch. Felipe Pelerán accused Lieutenant don Tomás de Rodríguez Correa, Captain don Manuel de Agreda, and Infantry Captain don Juan Ferrer, the fort's commander, of overseeing the illegal exit passage of two canoes out of the harbor.¹⁸

The entry from 1743 also involved a canoe, only this time it was carrying cacao away from the port. One of Agreda's guards captured 4 fanegas 17 pounds of it. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, *Comisos*, Volume 55, July 27, 1743, folios 100v-101.

¹⁷ Mario Briceño Perozo's "Estudio preliminar" discusses this case as well as the Olavarriaga and Beato visit in general. Briceño Perozo, "Estudio preliminar," pp. 11-203. See also "Autos criminales contra Benito de la Calle y correos y Capitán don Diego de Matos por un navío holandés que se apresó en Puerto Cabello," June 26, 1718, AGN, *Comisos*, Volume 3, Expediente 3, folios 219-238; and "Testimonio de los autos hechos de oficio sobre la sorpresa de un navío holandés hecho en el puerto de Cabello de la Costa de Caracas por la gente de don Diego de Matos," May 21, 1718, AGN, *Comisos*, Volume 4, Expediente 3, folios 53-372.

¹⁸ This was not the first time Rodríguez Correa stood accused of using his clout as a military officer to direct and benefit from smuggling operations. On December 11, 1737, Governor Zuloaga levied fines of 100 reales each against Rodríguez Correa, who was then *teniente cabo a guerra* for Tierra Firme, and don Silván Ladrón de Guevara, the lieutenant at Puerto Cabello. They had granted don Rafael de Saldías

No other soldier on duty that night was willing to sustain Pelerán's accusations against Rodríguez Correa and the two other officers. The case, assigned by Governor Zuloaga to Ferrer's lieutenant, don Martín González, quickly reverted against the artilleryman. In December he claimed that he had seen 2 canoes loaded with cacao pass the fort on their way out of the harbor on Sunday, October 8, 1740. Fellow members of his company, he claimed, informed him that Rodríguez Correa had given instructions to let them go without question. When interviewed by investigators, these same men denied under oath having said or heard anything that Pelerán related. Governor Zuloaga's January 7, 1741, ruling absolved Rodríguez Correa, Agreda, and Ferrer and ordered Pelerán pay the costs of the investigation and trial.¹⁹

The port's immediate hinterland showed similar restrictions on smuggling activities. It included some of the jurisdiction's most productive coastal valleys. Guaiguaza and San Esteban to the west and Borburata to the east produced hundreds of fanegas of cacao each year. Just as they avoided the port, smugglers, prácticos, and others involved in clandestine exchange generally avoided carrying out direct exchanges in these settlements. Nonetheless, some authorities in Valencia used the Puerto Cabello hinterland as their operations centers. Here they could call on their paid retainers and

license to sail his sloop the "Jesús, María y José" from Puerto Cabello to Coro to collect salt. Saldías made a forced landing in Curaçao instead. Zuloaga fined him 800 reales, an amount, like Rodríguez and Guevara's penalties, that was trivial in comparison with the hundreds of pesos the three men must have made from Saldías' visit to Curaçao. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, Volume 54, March 5, 1738, folios 120v-121. Governor Zuloaga fined another officer at the San Felipe fort for a similar abuse of his military power. In October 1742, Zuloaga fined don Juan Gayangos, engineer at the fort, 100 pesos for giving permission to sail from Puerto Cabello to Coro. The governor noted that the engineer lacked the authority to grant such a license. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara., Volume 53, December 4, 1742, folio 116v.

¹⁹ The court costs, totaling 24 pesos 2 reales 17 maravedís, were taken from his monthly salary. "Don Martín González, teniente de la compañía del Capitán don Juan Ferrer, contra Felipe Pelerán y otros para averiguar la procedencia de dos canoas con cacao," AGN, Comisos, Volume 21, Expediente 1, November 29, 1740, folios 1-35v.

employees as well as slaves on their estates. Their properties also served as defensive compounds, useful when conflicts erupted. For example, don Diego de Matos organized his excursions into the provincial interior from his 15,000-tree cacao hacienda in Guaiguaza. He and his men retreated there after assaulting the Dutch ship in Puerto Cabello in 1718. Don Miguel Hidalgo Malpica, who frequently served as the Valencia *alcalde ordinario de primer voto* and was named justice of the peace plenipotentiary by Commander General Lardizábal in 1735,²⁰ used his hacienda in San Esteban as his base. Don Carlos Felipe de Valenzuela, for many years director of patrols in Valencia's coastal territory from Puerto Cabello west to the Nirgua border, owned the second largest cacao hacienda in Agua Caliente.²¹ He often took slaves from his plantation to accompany him on raids at the mouth of the Agua Caliente River.²²

These settlements immediately south, west, and east of Puerto Cabello produced little *comisos* activity. The valley of San Esteban saw one *comisos* arrest and one capture of an illegally introduced slave, from 1696 and 1701, respectively.²³ Four *comisos* were

²⁰ "Indulto del delito de comercio ilícito, del Señor don Martín Lardizábal," Caracas, March 18, 1735, in Alfonso Marín, ed., *Actas del Cabildo de la Nueva Valencia del Rey*, Volume 3 (Valencia: Consejo Municipal, 1971), pp. 106-108. The commander general issued a general pardon for those Valencia residents who had been involved in smuggling. He named Hidalgo Malpica his new justice of the peace and put him in charge of collecting the indulto adjustments.

²¹ According to Olavarriaga, in 1720 Valenzuela owned an estate with 14,000 trees. Valencia cabildo regular don Gerónimo de Lamas owned the largest, which had 20,000 trees. Olavarriaga, *Instrucción general y particular*, p. 244.

²² "Autos criminales seguidos de oficio contra Tomás Moncada y Juan Clavería por introducción de ropa de ilícito comercio," AGN, *Comisos*, Volume 12, Expediente 3, folios 39-78. Seven Real Hacienda *Comisos* deposits list Valenzuela as the arresting official: AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, *Comisos*, Volume 42, December 5, 1722, folio 188; Volume 44, April 28, 1723, folios 190-191; Volume 46, April 30, 1727, folio 197v; May 5, 1727, folios 197v-198; November 7, 1727, folios 199v-200, Volume 51, May 7, 1735, folios 149-149v, and Volume 56, November 25, 1744, folios 162v-163.

²³ On April 13, 1696, the Real Hacienda officers in Caracas received 548 reales 9 maravedís, the monies that remained from the auction of don Alonso Rodríguez Ordóñez's possessions. These sold for 2985 reales 9 maravedís. Captain Vicente Machado Fonseca had arrested and accused him of trading with foreigners. Governor Berroterán concurred and sentenced him to exile from the Indies. AGN, Real

reported from Guaiguaza, in 1734, 1735, 1746, and 1747.²⁴ Borburata saw more action than the other two, with 7 Real Hacienda deposits from comisos from 1693 to 1756.²⁵

Arrests in the port and surrounding settlements were infrequent, but the beaches, mangroves, and settlements immediately around Puerto Cabello hummed with clandestine activity. Colonial officials, before and especially after the RCG set up shop, discouraged or controlled extra-legal commerce through the port itself, but they could not detach Puerto Cabello or its surroundings from the vast smuggling networks that operated in Valencia. Most of Valencia's coastal residents who did not have permanent positions on cacao estates or who did not serve in coastal patrols lived in and around the port. Agricultural export was the most dynamic sector of the province's economy, and many took advantage of the opportunities, some regular, some sporadic, which the port and its commercial activity presented. Many of the Valencia residents who dabbled in but did not make their lives smuggling lived in and around Puerto Cabello. They were fishermen in the port, members of the various guards, tailors, or overseers on nearby cacao haciendas in San Esteban or Guaiguaza.

Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volume 33, April 13, 1696, folios 233v-2343. On February 26, 1701, the Real Hacienda in Caracas received 2002 reales from the auction of Joseph, a slave illegally introduced at Puerto Cabello, who had been captured by don Fernando Páez de Vargas, the Valencia alcalde, near his estate in San Esteban. AGN, Real Hacienda, Composición de Negros de Mala Entrada, Volume 33, February 26, 1701, folios 210-210v.

²⁴ Two resulted from attempts to export agricultural products (1735 and 1746) and two came from the introduction of textiles (1734 and 1747). AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Volume 51, October 17, 1734, folios 143-143v; and November 9, 1735, folios 194-194v; Volume 57, May 24, 1746, folios 157v-158; and Volume 58, November 21, 1747, folios 166-166v.

²⁵ Two dated from the 1690s—one from the 1720s, and 4 from the 1740s. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volume 33, September 17, 1695, folios 200v-201; September 20, 1695, folios 202v-203v; Volume 47, November 16, 1728, folio 196; Volume 56, December 10, 1744, folios 164-164v; July 8, 1745, folios 169-169v; Volume 58, June 3, 1747, folios 162-163; and Volume 60, September 30, 1748, folios 91v-92v.

The port drew many from the interior and free blacks and pardos from the coast who sought employment, and the RCG was one of various possible employers that needed help hauling or shipping cacao to the coast. Often the recruiting for clandestine exchanges along the coast, for both one-time deals and more permanent enterprises, took place in and around the port. Guaiguaza and San Esteban, east and south of Puerto Cabello, respectively, were particularly busy.

Pedro Joseph Díaz Velasco, a tailor better known as Pedro the Cuban, lived in Puerto Cabello. Originally from Santiago de Cuba, he had a wife and 7 children in Caracas but preferred to practice his trade in Puerto Cabello. Smugglers from San Esteban, Guaiguaza, and Puerto Cabello used his Borburata home as a base for trading with the Dutch. *Prácticos* traveling along the coast made arrangements with muleteers and couriers to meet at Pedro the Cuban's house, where they completed transactions or planned new ones. As a tailor, Pedro the Cuban had legitimate reasons to have bolts of cloth stored in his house, just as it was expected that he would have many visitors.²⁶

Overseers and slaves provided shelter and meeting places for individuals involved in clandestine trade. Eugenio Riveros worked as an overseer in coastal cacao plantations. He used his position to collaborate with and protect *prácticos* who worked the Valencia coastline. In the early 1730s he managed don Juan Gabriel de Rada's estate in Ocumare, which he used to meet fellow Canary Island immigrant Pedro Zurita, who traveled the coast arranging exchanges with the Dutch. In 1734 Riveros was in San Esteban, now managing the cacao plantation of sisters doña María and doña Mauricia Sáenz Valera. He continued to collaborate with Zurita. In September his friend used his home to make

²⁶ "Causa criminal seguida contra Diego Ventura Rodríguez y otros reos por comercio ilícito," Puerto Cabello, December 4, 1735, AGN, Comisos, Volume 20, Expediente 1, folios 1-89v.

arrangements to purchase textiles and other goods from the Dutch at Agua Caliente.

Riveros also loaned Zurita the mules to carry the load.²⁷

Dominga Gemba, a free morena who lived in San Esteban, also let out her home for smugglers to meet. Here Zurita and his partner, Juan the Aragonese, met up with Juan Andrés Sequera, a free mulatto whom they had contracted in Maracay to carry the silver specie with which they would pay their Dutch counterparts. Juan the Aragonese, the major práctico on the Valencia coast during these years, enjoyed a variety of safe houses and friendly haciendas where he could spend the night, hide, or carry out secret meetings. One was Dominga Gemba's house; another was doña Mariana Quixán's cacao estate in Guaiguaza, where he periodically visited and met with his partners at the residence of a slave named Fabián.²⁸

Agua Caliente

Smuggling through the Agua Caliente River valley was for the bold and well connected. Officers assigned to patrol the route watched it closely and effectively. For years Carlos Felipe de Valenzuela successfully retained responsibility over the path's northern half and the mouth of the Agua Caliente River. The southern half of the route fell under the authority of the Valencia justice of the peace, or in his absence, the cabildo's mayors. Whereas the juez de comisos on the Caribbean side depended on the governor in Caracas and after 1730 on the RCG factor in Puerto Cabello, the justice of the peace was not obliged to share control or limit his authority over the Agua Caliente trail. In February 1730 Joseph Díaz de León, the military corporal in Puerto Cabello,

²⁷ "Causa criminal sobre comercio ilícito contra Pedro Zurita, Juan Aragonés, Francisco García y Pedro Ledo, reos ausentes, y contra Juan Andrés de Sequera y Eugenio Riveros, presentes," Patanemo, June 20, 1734, AGN, Comisos, Volume 14, Expediente 1, folios 1-109v.

²⁸ Ibid.

exceeded his authority by issuing a *guía* to don Matías de Lezama to transport 2 barrels and 4 flasks of aguardiente from Puerto Cabello to Valencia. Pedro Tellez, the Valencia justice of the peace, confiscated the alcohol as soon as Lezama brought it into the city. On March 3, 1730, he reported the confiscation to Governor Lope Carrillo. The governor responded quickly, confirming 10 days later that Tellez was justified in his action and that Díaz de León had surpassed his authority in issuing the license. He fined the cabo 50 pesos. Díaz, as cabo in Puerto Cabello, could grant Lezama a license to provide aguardiente to his crew while his ship was in port, but he had no authority to issue licenses for transport.²⁹

Valenzuela was responsible for the only comisos arrests done along the Agua Caliente River in the first half of the eighteenth century. In April 1723, the royal treasury in Caracas recorded the deposit of 123 pesos 21 maravedís, the result of his capture of 8 zurrone (about 800 pounds) of cacao along the Agua Caliente trail.³⁰ In 1731 Valenzuela, now juez comisionario assigned by Pedro Olavarriaga, made a rare arrest at the mouth of the Agua Caliente River.³¹ On Sunday, October 7, 1731, Andrés Pérez Camejo informed him that he had seen a Dutch canoe with 5 Dutchmen and one Spaniard unloading at the river's mouth. Valenzuela, accompanied by Pérez Camejo and 5 of Valenzuela's slaves, set up an ambush. At dawn, they surprised Juan Clavería, better

²⁹ "Autos en que se declararon por decomisos dos barriles y cuatro frascos de aguardiente aprehendidos por el teniente de la ciudad de Valencia," AGN, Comisos, Volume 12, Expediente 2, folios 33-38. Also, AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro General y Común de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, Volume 48, June 6, 1730, folios 161v-162. It is not clear what Lezama intended to do with the aguardiente once he reached Valencia.

³⁰ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volume 44, April 28, 1723, folios 190-191. The cacao was sold at auction—I assume in Puerto Cabello—for 1439, at approximately 13 pesos per fanega.

³¹ "Autos criminales seguidos de oficio contra Tomás Moncada y Juan Clavería por introducción de ropa de ilícito comercio," AGN, Comisos, Volume 12, Expediente 3, folios 39-78.

known as Juan the Aragonese. A little further up the trail they caught his partner, Tomás Moncada, who armed with a shotgun, was guarding the southern access to the river's mouth. The two men had between them 255 pesos worth of finished textiles, bolts of cloth, and hats. Valenzuela handed them over to the RCG factor in Puerto Cabello, Diego de Aróstegui, on October 10.³²

Juan the Aragonese used this spot to meet couriers, messengers, and muleteers, as well as load and unload goods purchased from the Dutch in Tucacas. He was back there in 1734, having made arrangements with one of Valenzuela's corporals to load cacao at the river's mouth and transport it to Tucacas.³³ Clavería and his partners kept to the coastline. The farthest inland they ventured was the settlements immediately around Puerto Cabello. Juan the Aragonese had his contacts and safe houses along the coast but he had not developed any protections on the southern side of the coastal range. The work on the interior he left to others, whom he contracted with the promise of a portion of the goods imported. Sequera, for example, served as a messenger and money carrier for Clavería and his partner Zurita in 1734, traveling from Valencia to the coast by way of the Agua Caliente trail, carrying 350 pesos in silver coin.

Valencia

Comisos activities in the capital of the jurisdiction followed the same pattern as its port and the legally sanctioned trail that joined the two. In the years under consideration, there were no comisos in Valencia, almost none in Agua Caliente, and very few in Puerto Cabello. In any regards, the city of Valencia was not nearly as active as its port. In the

³² They were eventually transferred to the royal jail in Caracas but escaped before they were to stand trial before the governor. *Ibid.*, folios 70-78.

³³ "Causa criminal sobre comercio ilícito contra Pedro Zurita," folios 30-32, 34-34v.

early 1730s the city was just beginning to form as an urban core. In 1720 it had 70 houses with tile roofs, and an equal number with thatch.³⁴ Most vecinos spent most of the year out of town, on their farms in the interior valleys, on their coastal estates, or, for the wealthiest, dividing their time between the two. Some of those with coastal and interior properties passed through town when called to a cabildo meeting.³⁵ It was not until Joseph Luis Felipes' period as justice of the peace in the 1740s that work began on a *casas reales* building and jail. Before then authorities either placed prisoners under house arrest or took them to their own homes, using a spare bedroom or storage space as a cell. The city also lacked facilities to store and distribute goods. The few retail shop owners, or *pulperos*, in the area had their stores on rural estates on the outskirts of town, close to the rural populations they served. Traders also stored legal and extra-legal goods outside of town, along the major trails that cut across the valley floor and on estates that had reputations of being safe places.³⁶

Local political power was concentrated in the city, but economic power was scattered outside of town. The major trade routes in the area circumvented the city. The main reason for traders to enter Valencia was to obtain *guías* to travel in and out of the jurisdiction. They deposited their textiles, foodstuffs, tobacco, or hides in the countryside and entered the city to visit either the *alcalde ordinario* or the justice of the peace. Since these men also resided outside of town, many times traders or muleteers had to find them on their estates, out on patrol, or they had to get permission from their *cabos*, often

³⁴ Torcuato Manzo Núñez, *Historia del Estado de Carabobo* (Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1981), p. 61.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ "Autos contra don Joseph Luis Felipes y don Ignacio de Goya," AANHV, RP, Tomo 384, Signatura 2-384-1, folios 184-192.

assigned to guard the jurisdiction's major exits and crossroads and sometimes easier to find than their patrons.

In Valencia the seat of cabildo power was located far from the cacao-producing valleys of the coast.³⁷ Many of the jurisdiction's coastal inhabitants lived with their backs to Valencia's interior. Their world consisted of the coastal valley in which they lived and worked, the neighboring valleys, and the sea before them. They occasionally bought hides, muscovado sugar, sweets, and tobacco from the interior, but the interior valleys were as foreign as the islands to the north and the distant llanos to the south. The Valencia cabildo achieved little influence or control over the jurisdiction's coastal cacao trade. Individual members participated, trading their haciendas' harvest with Canary Islander and Dutch traders. They also persecuted some smuggling, but the authority they exercised was spatially very limited. Cabildo officers did not attempt what they knew was beyond their powers.³⁸

Powerful members of the Valencia cabildo were comfortable with the RCG's taking control over the legal cacao trade but were unwilling to cede their own control over the district's extra-legal tobacco trade. The monopoly trade company neither faced resistance from nor had to placate local authorities when it set up in Puerto Cabello and established coastal patrols. The company's dominance over the coast immediately around the port did not pose a threat to the Valencian local elite. In fact, local cacao-plantation owners welcomed the presence of the company factoría in Puerto Cabello,

³⁷ In this Valencia was similar to Nirgua, its neighbor immediately to the west. Both districts contrasted with San Felipe, a district in which the seat of political power was surrounded by cacao groves. Nirgua and San Felipe will be examined in the next two chapters.

³⁸ For a brief discussion of the trade between the coast and interior valleys, see D.F. Maza Zavala, "La estructura económica de una plantación colonial en Venezuela," in Arcila Farías et al., *La Obra Pía de Chuao*, p. 101.

which presented an accessible and consistent buyer for growers concerned over the difficulties of sea and land travel, freight rates, intra-provincial taxes and animosities, and the vicissitudes of legal and extra-legal markets. The RCG represented no threat to the Valencia political elite since their influence over coastal exchange in and around Puerto Cabello in the years preceding the company was minimal at best. The company, so long as it concentrated on the coast and on the cacao trade, was a boon for them. Such was not the case with the push made by the governor and backed by the Crown in the 1720s to establish a permanent justice of the peace in the area with expanded powers. In contrast to the RCG base in Puerto Cabello, the governor's proxy represented a serious threat to cabildo power in general and the Valencia elite's corner on the illegal tobacco trade in particular.

Until the 1720s Venezuela's governors had not had many problems with the Valencia cabildo. The local elite was more at odds with the Caracas cabildo members and the mantuano elite than with the Crown's maximum representative. Tension grew and conflicts became more frequent after Governor Portales extended the office of justice of the peace into areas previously administered by cabildos alone.³⁹ Valencia, because of its cacao economy and the prevalence of smuggling related to it, came under closer scrutiny. Diego de Matos' open confrontations with a significant segment of the Valencia elite was a sign of things to come, but Matos' interventions in Valencia were periodic at best.⁴⁰ Portales' naming of justices of the peace, and their subsequent

³⁹ Gilberto Quintero, *El teniente justicia mayor*, pp. 130ff.

⁴⁰ Matos' confrontations with the Valencia and other cabildos is discussed in Chapter 3 on Caracas.

selection of cabos to serve them locally, made the governor's concern with smuggling in and through Valencia a permanent engagement.

The effect was felt immediately. Comisos in the jurisdiction of Valencia jumped dramatically in the 1720s. As recorded in the Real Hacienda account books, comisos performed in Valencia between 1711 and 1720 totaled 12. The 1721 to 1730 total was 34, the highest decade total for the years 1700 to 1740.⁴¹

The local elite was internally divided by a latent rift between the prominent Valencia families that controlled the cabildo. Two families, the González de Parragas and the Rodríguez de Lamas families, led one side. The Páez de Vargas family led the other. The first staunchly opposed the governors' efforts to centralize control over the province's interior; the second collaborated with the governors' representatives in hopes of fortifying their position locally. Open confrontation between the two groups exploded in 1718 and again in the mid-1740s. In both instances the Páez de Vargas family members had aligned themselves with provincial authorities. Between these two peaks of family rivalry, when prominent family leaders attacked each other directly, the feud simmered along. The sides sparred, attempting to gain advantage in the internal smuggling trade.

Logistical, spatial, economic, and political factors precluded effective cabildo resistance to the Guipuzcoa Company's control over some of the Valencia coast. The company's presence, however, did not radically change the pattern of smuggling in the jurisdiction. In fact, except for the elimination of the rare yet spectacular captures or exchanges in the port of Puerto Cabello, it reinforced the dynamics. Smugglers traveling

⁴¹ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volume 34-53.

from the llanos, the Segovia Highlands, or Valencia's interior valleys avoided the route between Valencia and Puerto Cabello by way of Agua Caliente before and after 1730. Regular cabildo officers, powerful local landowners, and residents of the jurisdiction's interior valleys were not threatened by the company's presence because they were less involved in smuggling cacao and more involved in smuggling tobacco. The route for the tobacco trade was through Yagua and the coastal valleys of Patanemo and Turiamo. This is where the cabildo factions and the justices of the peace concentrated their attention.⁴²

Valencia's Second Route

Heavy rains and flooding at times made the officially sanctioned Agua Caliente route impassable, especially during the wet season.⁴³ Additionally, peddlers and muleteers carrying goods from the Valleys of Aragua, the central llanos, and the eastern parts of Valencia often found it easier to travel directly to the coast instead of having to go all the way to the jurisdiction's western edge to take the Agua Caliente trail. From 1734 Caracas sanctioned a second route to the sea. That year Captain General Lardizábal approved the use of the trail between Yagua and Patanemo, so long as goods and people traveled directly from Patanemo to Puerto Cabello, either by land or by sea, with no stops along the way.⁴⁴ The main concern was over the valley and port of Turiamo, a popular site for smuggling on Valencia's coast. This was compounded by worries over *prácticos*' use of Patanemo, Turiamo, and the various trails that joined them to the interior and to

⁴² The RCG did eventually turn its attention to tobacco around mid-century, mainly in Puerto Cabello and San Felipe. Hussey, *The Caracas Company*, pp. 164-165.

⁴³ It was the Agua Caliente River more than anything else that, when it flooded, impeded transportation. "Autos contra don Joseph Luis Felipes y don Ignacio de Goya," AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 2-384-1, folio 180.

⁴⁴ "Autos contra don Joseph Luis Felipes y don Ignacio de Goya," AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-379-2, folios 71-74.

neighboring coastal valleys like Ocumare and Cuyagua in Valencia and Choroni and Chuao in Caracas.

The root of this concern was the tobacco trade. Of the province's central coast provinces, Valencia was the tobacco-smuggling leader. In part founded to counter the trade with Curaçao, the RCG actually contributed to the expansion of the informal tobacco trade. The company's main concern during its first two decades in Venezuela was with cacao. It was slow to turn its attention and commercial, military machinery towards the illegal tobacco trade. Venezuelan tobacco exporters and their Curaçaoan partners also took some time to make the adjustment. The coastal patrols the RCG established in its first years in Venezuela achieved one of its main objectives: The number of ships that sailed from Curaçao to Venezuela declined markedly in these first five years of RCG activity. As a result Venezuelan tobacco exported from Curaçao to the Netherlands dropped drastically in the five-year period from 1730 to 1734, but by the end of the decade the trade returned to the levels it had reached during the heyday of the Curaçaoan-Venezuelan trade, the 1720s.⁴⁵

The patterns of transprovincial transportation and informal commodity export were altered by the company's presence in ports and coastal settlements like Puerto Cabello and San Felipe and the elimination, albeit temporary, of the Dutch trading outpost at Tucacas, replaced in the 1730s by Commandant Lardizábal with a military fort. The amount of tobacco that passed through Valencia increased with the founding of the monopoly trade company, as the RCG eliminated or made difficult other routes, such as

⁴⁵ Cuadro 3.1 in Aizpurua, "El comercio holandés en el Caribe," p. 136; Cuadro 17 in idem, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 327-328; and Appendix 7 in Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 230-231. All commodities exports from Curaçao to the Netherlands dropped dramatically during this period. Tobacco exports, however, recovered more quickly than others.

the Yaracuy River valley or the pass along the Agua Caliente river. Of the 34 Real Hacienda deposits that resulted from the confiscation of tobacco (a capture of either tobacco or tobacco with other commodities) and that gave some indication so that jurisdiction could be determined, 14 occurred in Valencia. Of these 14 half happened in Yagua, Patanemo, or Turiamo. These figures probably do not reflect the volume or the trade or the quantity of confiscations that resulted from the tobacco trade. This is because local officers had a penchant for catching things on the way in. This pattern emerges clearly from the royal account book records from Yagua, Patanemo, and Turiamo—cabos and jueces de comisos tended to miss the arrival of mule trains loaded with tobacco in their respective coastal posts. Instead, they commonly intervened after the weed was exchanged for Curaçaoan imports.⁴⁶

Turiamo, Patanemo's neighbor to the east, was off limits for residents of adjacent coastal valleys and for residents and traders from Valencia's interior and beyond. The valley's cacao production lagged behind that of other Valencia coastal valleys. Drainage in Turiamo was not good, and that, combined with scant surface area for planting trees, limited its capacity to produce the fruit. Olavarriaga estimated in 1720 that the 8 cacao estates in Turiamo had a total of 37,400 trees that produced each year 374 fanegas of cacao.⁴⁷ That same year, again according to the juez comisionario, its immediate neighbors outstripped Turiamo: the upper and lower valleys of Ocumare had 239,000

⁴⁶ For example, of the 6 arrests recorded from Patanemo, 4 involved textiles. For Turiamo, textiles were captured in 7 of the 15 recorded comisos. And for Ocumare, 12 of the 13 recorded arrests involved textiles. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volumes 33-63A.

⁴⁷ Olavarriaga, *Instrucción general y particular*, pp. 236-237.

cacao trees and Patanemo had 129,000 trees.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the valley was active for reasons other than simple cacao yields. The prevailing winds and tides in Turiamo made it attractive to clandestine traders: sailing ships could enter the narrow bay only during the day and exit at night.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the valley's relative isolation combined with its proximity to richer ones made it a popular spot for comercio ilícito. Valencia residents on both sides of the coastal range also found justification or excuse for the steady flow of foot and mule traffic between Turiamo and interior settlements, for although the valley lagged behind others in cacao production, it surpassed them, at least valencianos claimed, in agricultural production of foodstuffs for domestic consumption. Occupants of the district's interior crossed over the coastal range with salted beef, hides, and muscovado sugar and exchanged them for casaba, plantains, corn, and tubers. Residents of Turiamo also made the trip inland, though it would seem less frequently.⁵⁰

Legal travel to Patanemo was difficult to distinguish from illegal travel to Turiamo. This is because the trail from the interior to the coast was the same until one climbed high into the coastal range. Only then did the path split, with one fork descending northwest to Patanemo and the other northeast to Turiamo. Additionally, many muleteers, peddlers, and prácticos reached the coast by the legal route to Patanemo and then made the short hike west over the ridge that separated this valley from Turiamo. The same was done

⁴⁸ The total annual production for Ocumare and Patanemo, calculated by Olavarriaga at 100 trees per one fanega, was 2390 fanegas and 1290 fanegas, respectively. *Ibid.*, pp. 233-235, 237-239.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

⁵⁰ "Autos contra don Joseph Luis Felipes y don Ignacio de Goya," AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 2-384-1, folio 179. Residents of Turiamo made *funche*, or husked, toasted corn, and sold it to buyers from the interior.

along the narrow path that connected Turiamo to Ocumare.⁵¹ The Valencia justice of the peace named a cabo to patrol Patanemo and Turiamo and the sea side of the mountain trail.⁵² Cabos assigned to this position were kept busy by Dutch sloops that called at both ports, Curaçaoan and Venezuelan prácticos who disembarked there, slaves on the cacao plantations who traded with them, and Venezuelans from the interior valleys and the llanos who arrived to trade or travel to Curaçao. The cabos, who normally had the assistance of three or four men at the most and who had to divide their time between the valleys, frequently were outnumbered, avoided, or outwitted.

On the south side of the coastal range, the outskirts of the city of Valencia, the Indian town of Guacara and the Spanish and creole village of Yagua were key strategic locations in the traffic through Patanemo and Turiamo. Farms, rural residences, and outposts that served as storage facilities for intracolonial commerce surrounded Valencia. Merchants, cultivators, and muleteers deposited tobacco de cura seca at these places until they were ready to make the trip to the coast. They did not travel through the city nor leave their loads there; instead, they entered Valencia to secure licenses from the mayors or justices of the peace.

Guacara, San Diego, and Los Guayos

Valencia's three pueblos de indios formed an arc between Valencia and Yagua. The largest, most populous of the three, Guacara, hugged the shores of Lake Valencia just south of Yagua. To its west was San Diego, and to the southwest, Los Guayos.

⁵¹ Ibid., folio 179v. Actually there were at least two other trails, besides the explicitly prohibited one, that joined Turiamo with Valencia's interior: the vereda de Yagarua and the Pica de las Palmas, which ended in Turiamo next to don Lorenzo de Cedeño's cacao estate. Ibid.; also see Olavarriaga, *Instrucción general y particular*, p. 236, which indicates Cedeño had in 1720 a 8000-tree estate in the valley.

⁵² Another was often assigned exclusively to Ocumare.

Anyone traveling north or south between Valencia and Yagua and east or west along the lake's northern shore would have to pass by one of these three towns.

Guacara's contribution to Valencia's contraband in tobacco was twofold. First, the *corregidores* of the Indian town extended their authority, with or without the governor's mandate, beyond the town's Indian population and outside its limits. Specifically, they kept watch over the trail head that led up the mountains towards Turiamo and Patanemo, at times detaining individuals for smuggling goods in or out of the province. Second, members of established smuggling networks recruited local Indians seasonally or by the job. Traders and *prácticos* often went through the *corregidor* or local *cacique* to hire Indians as muleteers, runners, or lookouts along the trail.

The *corregidores* based in Guacara enforced commercial restrictions in the surrounding area and made sure Valencia's other colonial authorities kept out of the Indian towns. In 1723 *Corregidor* don Tomás de Alvarado captured 2 *petacas* of tobacco on the hill that descended into the Turiamo Valley.⁵³ The Real Hacienda books in Caracas include 2 *comisos* entries attributed to Juan Sánchez Ramos: one from March of 1724, when he captured textiles and two mules, and another from August of 1726, when he seized 5 mules on the *cuesta de Turiamo*.⁵⁴ In 1746 don Francisco Díaz Gallo, the *corregidor* for the valleys of Aragua, caught 62 loads of smoking tobacco and 58 mules on the trail and in the mountains behind Yagua.⁵⁵ The account books list no arrests or

⁵³ "La *cuesta que baja al Valle*." AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, *Comisos*, Volume 44, November 15, 1723, folios 199v-200.

⁵⁴ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, *Comisos*, Volume 43, March 22, 1724, folios 159-160; and Volume 46, August 12, 1726, folios 193-194.

⁵⁵ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, *Comisos*, Volume 57, May 25, 1746, folio 158v. The tobacco and mules were auctioned in Puerto Cabello and La Guaira for just less than 2169

confiscations made within the town of Guacara. The corregidores' arrests and their protection of the Indian towns they administered led to tensions with other local officials.

Two 1724 confiscations on the trail just north of Yagua revealed the antagonism between the Valencia *alcaldes* and the Guacara *corregidor*. Both had allies, employees, and retainers in Yagua. Neither was capable of consolidating regular control over the trailhead. The *alcaldes* were strong in the interior valleys and in recent years, they had exercised enough influence in Yagua to weaken the trading done there under the *corregidor's* auspices. They could not, however, guarantee what would happen on the beaches. The *corregidor*, in turn, could protect traders and their goods as they gathered and prepared themselves in sites around the Turiamo trail, and he had an ally in the Turiamo and Patanemo *teniente*, at the time Mateo de Osorio, who guaranteed smooth transaction and transport on the Caribbean end. But the middle was a wildcard for the *corregidor*, and in 1724 the *alcaldes* targeted smugglers who operated with his protection at this weak point.

The *alcaldes* made their move at a time when the governor's representatives in interior towns and cities had little backing from Caracas. The Crown's representative in the Province of Venezuela during the 1720s was don Diego Portales y Meneses, who held office between 1721 and 1728. Portales oversaw a major reform in colonial administration—the expansion of the office of justices of the peace to places where there previously had been none. Valencia was one of them.⁵⁶ But Portales experienced

pesos. Of that, just under half—1088 pesos—was deposited in the royal coffers. The rest went to cover various costs incurred by Díaz Gallo and officials involved in the case.

⁵⁶ For Portales' expansion of the office of justice of the peace, see Quintero, *El teniente justicia mayor*, pp. 130ff.

serious difficulties in governing the province, and he spent as much time out of office as he did in.⁵⁷ In fact, his term consisted of three distinct periods (1721-1723, 1723-1724, and 1726-1728), and during the times he was suspended, removed, or absent, either the Bishop of Caracas or the Caracas *alcaldes* took over. They tended to give less emphasis if any to Portales' efforts towards administrative centralization. Local elites were keen to take advantage of these moments, and in the spring of 1724, at a time when there was no justice of the peace for the jurisdiction, the Valencia *alcaldes* moved to expand their authority in Valencia's rural areas. Juan Sánchez Ramos, the Guacara *corregidor*, taxed mule trains that passed through Yagua on their way to the Turiamo trail; he had men set up along the *cuesta de Periquito* to ensure the safe passage of those who had paid his one peso per load fee.⁵⁸

Sánchez Ramos' 1724 seizure angered the Valencia *alcaldes*, for he had detained traders who operated with their approval. The *alcaldes* returned the favor. The *cabildo* officers were under standing orders from the governor not to go out further than 4 leagues from the city, so they turned to the *alcalde de la Santa Hermandad* to exert *cabildo* power in Yagua.⁵⁹ Two men held the office—don Juan Páez and don Nicolás de Herrera—and accompanied by some Yagua residents, they caught 7 or 8 mules, 4 of them carrying

⁵⁷ Portales' troubles began when he named the bishop of Caracas, Doctor don Juan José de Escalona y Calatayud, his temporary replacement if and when he was absent. This offended and angered the members of the Caracas *cabildo*, who had enjoyed the position of provisional governor since the seventeenth century and defended it. Portales' appointment of Bishop Escalona began an enduring antagonism between the governor and the Caracas political elite, which only ended with Portales' final exit from the province in 1728. See Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*, pp. 229-242.

⁵⁸ "Autos de comiso hecho por los *alcaldes de la Santa Hermandad de Valencia*, en virtud de comisión dada por los *alcaldes ordinarios de dicha ciudad* y carta del *corregidor del pueblo de Guacara*," Valencia, February 17, 1724, folios 315-356, especially folios 340, 344.

⁵⁹ The *alcaldes de la Santa Hermandad*, or Holy Brotherhood, were municipal officers in charge of maintaining order in the municipalities' rural areas. Aizpurua, "Municipios: Siglos XVI-XVIII," in his *Temas de Historia de Venezuela y del Caribe*, p. 81.

imports, coming down the Turiamo trail. The owners and the mule drivers managed to escape.⁶⁰

It is not clear whether Corregidor Sánchez Ramos received his one peso fee in cash or in kind, before or after the exchange along the coast. In any event, the furtive trade under his watch had received a legal blow, and he responded in similar fashion, bringing charges of fraud and duplicity against the *alcaldes de la Santa Hermandad*. He accused them of defrauding the royal exchequer, claiming that they had divided the impounded goods among themselves. The *comiso* was a mix: cane alcohol, textiles, a fishing net, 9 knives, flour, oil, and mules. Sánchez Ramos and the witnesses he interviewed in Yagua claimed that Páez and Herrera kept for themselves 6 hats, 4 hams, 3 Flemish cheeses, one bottle of oil, some sackcloth, and 3 small barrels of cane alcohol.⁶¹ Nothing was ever proved against Páez and Herrera, but Sánchez Ramos did manage to tie them up in legal wranglings for a couple of months, until the Valencia *alcaldes ordinarios* replaced them.

The Valencia *alcaldes* struck back in March. Alcalde and Warden don Pablo de Landaeta, warden of the *cabildo*, sent Field Marshal Gerónimo Rodríguez de Lamas, the new *alcalde de la Santa Hermandad*, to Yagua where he arrested three local residents on the Turiamo trail.⁶² Santiago Silveira, standard-bearer in the Yagua militia, his son Pedro Silveira, and his son-in-law Juan de Hevia y Solís were detained briefly. They quickly found *fiadores* (financial backers) to post their bail: Captain don Vicente Machado de Fonseca, *alguacil* (constable) and *regidor perpetuo* (permanent *cabildo* member) in

⁶⁰ "Autos de comiso hecho por los *alcaldes de la Santa Hermandad de Valencia*," folios 315ff.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, folio 336v.

⁶² "Denuncia de comiso y usurpación en la cuesta de Turiamo," AGN, Comisos, Volume 11, Expediente 1 bis, Valencia, March 17, 1724, folios 38-51.

Valencia, vouched for the Silveiras, as did Valencia standard bearer don Juan Machado de Fonseca.⁶³ These men worked with the complicity of the Guacara corregidor and the tacit support of powerful members of the Valencia elite, men who did not for the moment control the cabildo.⁶⁴

As mentioned above, no comisos occurred within the town of Guacara. Indians from Guacara and neighboring pueblos de indios participated in the clandestine trade with the Dutch, but they tended to do it outside of their communities as members, usually very low in rank, of operations organized and directed by non-Indians. For example, on Sunday, April 25, 1724, Pedro de Sierra, commissioned by Valencia alcalde Miguel Hidalgo Malpica to patrol the Turiamo-Patanemo trail, crossed from Patanemo to Turiamo by land and found two men on the beach waiting for Dutch ships to arrive.⁶⁵ Pedro Prado, a Spaniard from Lugo who lived in Yagua, and Juan Salvador Salazar, a seventeen-year old Indian from Turmero, were caught with 5 loads of smoking tobacco. Sierra left the tobacco in the custody of the overseer on Lorenzo Cedeño's cacao hacienda in Turiamo and marched the two men to Valencia, where they were jailed in Hidalgo Malpica's home.

Subsequent testimony, including Salazar's confession, revealed that Prado and he formed part of a larger group of men who exported tobacco through Turiamo. Prado and two other residents of Yagua owned the weed. His brother-in-law, Ignacio Matute,

⁶³ Ibid., folios 41-44. I assume these two were brothers.

⁶⁴ The Caracas alcaldes, filling in for Governor Portales, were in charge of the case. They did not pursue it and left it inconclusive.

⁶⁵ "Se acusa a Victorio Carrizales, Ignacio Matute, Pedro Prado y otras personas, entre ellos indios, de tener un cargamento de tabaco ilícito de los holandeses," Valencia, April 30, 1734, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-197-5, folios 1-26.

owned 2 of the 5 loads; Victor Carrizal, also of Yagua, owned one; Prado owned 2. They had hired 8 men to help deliver it to Turiamo. Seven of them were Indians; one Salazar identified as a mulatto.⁶⁶ Salazar argued that his extreme poverty forced him to accept Prado's offer. Three months before the arrest, Salazar had left his hometown of Turmero in search of work in Puerto Cabello. He needed to earn money, he claimed, to maintain his family and pay off his corregidor. This is why he accepted Prado's offer of 20 reales to help transport the tobacco to Turiamo.⁶⁷ On December 7, 1735, Captain General Lardizábal sentenced him to one year of penal service in Fort San Felipe in Puerto Cabello.⁶⁸ Prado received his sentence in absentia, as he had escaped from Hidalgo Malpica's improvised jail at some point before June 1734.⁶⁹

None of the *cargadores* named by Salazar was found; their corregidores made little effort to track them down. The other two Yagua residents also escaped prosecution. Hidalgo Malpica's investigations stalled in Yagua. When he visited their homes there, Carrizal's mother, doña Josepha Benítez, and Matute's father, Alférez Tomás Matute, both claimed their sons were in the llanos, Carrizal in San Carlos and Matute in El Pao.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ They were, according to Salazar, Alberto, from Guacara; Juan, from Guacara; Hipólito, from Orituco; Martín, from Orituco; Pedro Alcántara, from Turmero; Gaspar, from Turmero; and the mulato was named Asensio.

⁶⁷ Salazar's confession, folios 6-8. He also argued that he was not guilty of *comercio ilícito*, since he carried the tobacco and did not actually engage in its exchange.

⁶⁸ "Se acusa a Victorio Carrizales, Ignacio Matute, Pedro Prado y otras personas," folio 23.

⁶⁹ Salazar was transferred in June of 1734 to the RCG navío under don Joseph de Escarate, the RCG factor in Puerto Cabello. The RCG ships docked at Puerto Cabello were frequently used to hold detainees accused of smuggling. They proved more reliable jails than any building in Valencia or the jurisdiction's other towns.

⁷⁰ "Se acusa a Victorio Carrizales, Ignacio Matute, Pedro Prado y otras personas," folios 9-10.

Corregidores assigned to these pueblos were limited in their ability to influence the trade over the mountains, as evidenced by Sánchez Ramos' setbacks and frustrations. The pueblos' juridical status as separate from creole settlements gave corregidores, Indians, and sometimes non-Indians who managed to live inside the towns, some autonomy and protection for their involvement in smuggling. But the position of corregidor was not an adequate basis for building a smuggling operation or for extending patronage and influence over smuggling networks. To benefit from the informal trade through the Guacara area, its corregidores needed to strike deals with other authorities of similar position and they depended on the good will of more powerful officers, like the justices of the peace.

As the years passed and exports and demand for cacao and tobacco expanded, justices of the peace assigned to Valencia became more concerned about the pueblos de indios in the area, especially Guacara. Corregidores could stifle or facilitate movement through the immediate area (up to the first steps of the Turiamo trail), but as their authority was limited to administering Indian villages, they could not justify, nor did they have the resource base to even try, exerting their influence along the coast.⁷¹ The justice of the peace on the other hand did, and as the informal tobacco trade through Valencia expanded, they increasingly sought to consolidate local offices and thereby expand and diversify their authority. Justices of the peace who also served as corregidores took advantage of the exceptions enjoyed by Indian towns in that they could move in and out of these exclusive domains. This was a common practice in the Valleys of Aragua, east

⁷¹ This includes the seaside of the mountain trails and rest stops.

of Valencia, where the Indian population was denser and greater.⁷² It became the norm in Valencia under don Joseph Luis Felipes, who was Valencia's justice of the peace and the corregidor for Guacara, San Diego, and Los Guayos and from 1739 through 1746. Felipe also enlarged the justice of the peace's influence in the district by naming cabos to patrol key settlements and routes. One of these was the hamlet of Yagua.

Yagua

Yagua stood at a crossroads of the east-west royal road that joined Caracas, Aragua, and Valencia, and the trail head for the mule paths that went over the mountains to the coast. Residents of the area, mostly creoles and Canary Islander immigrants, cultivated subsistence crops, tobacco that was processed into *tabaco de cura negra* for chewing, and some cases, sugarcane, from which they made muscovado sugar. While regional demand for these products helped integrate Yagua into local circuits of commodity exchange, the dominant factor in the settlement's economy was the coastal trade. Yagua was a staging, rendezvous, and storage area for excursions to the beach and sea. Its residents received the tobacco and the mules that carried it. Some owned their own mule trains, sold mules to muleteers, or rented them out to smugglers who passed through the area. Some stored other people's tobacco while others bought it and took charge of transporting it to market. A handful of Yagua homes were known throughout Valencia and beyond as safe houses, places where anyone—smugglers, justices of the peace, *prácticos*—could drop off their wares and know they were secure. Residents also collaborated with colonial officials in their efforts to suppress, tax, or gain advantage in

⁷² Some examples include don Manuel Díaz Martel, don Francisco Díaz Gallo, and don Francisco Esteban de las Mariñas. From AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Volume 45, folios 179v-180; Volume 46, folios 194v-196v, 200v-201; Volume 47, folios 190v-191; Volume 51, folios 144v-145, and Volume 52, folios 162v-163v.

the clandestine trade through Yagua. Some served as informants, others were members of posses, and a few opened their homes to *alcaldes* or *jueces de comisos* when they passed through the area. Others billeted the corporals assigned to the area.

The most renowned safe house in Yagua in the early eighteenth century belonged to French immigrant don Joseph de la Mota.⁷³ De la Mota's uncommon consolidation of diverse productive assets and personal contacts guaranteed him material support and backers no matter what political squabbles were going on around him. He had moved to Yagua in 1716 with his wife, Catalina Vielma, of Turmero. They arrived with a herd of cattle Catalina had inherited from her previous husband. They put together a successful rural store, which became a mainstay on Lake Valencia's north shore.⁷⁴ In Yagua they grew corn and other crops for their own consumption and for sale. Mota owned a cacao plantation in Turiamo. Their three daughters, who lived at home with their parents, were in charge of the informal *pulpería*. With the money they earned from the sale of cattle, corn, and other crops, they bought *papelón*, salted beef, and other victuals, which they resold in Yagua, Valencia, the coastal valleys, and Puerto Cabello. Their house in Yagua had a tile roof.⁷⁵ In 1736, Commandant Martín de Lardizábal, following a real *cédula*, ordered all foreigners to leave the province as part of the colonial administration's effort to tighten its control over commerce in the province. Joseph de la Mota, who had been born in Paris, petitioned the captain general for an exemption. His representative in the

⁷³ "Autos contra don Joseph Luis Felipes y don Ignacio de Goya," AANH, RP, Civiles, Tomo 384, Signatura 2-384-1, folios 231, 245-245v.

⁷⁴ "Información puesta por don Joseph de la Mota residente en el Valle de Yagua, jurisdicción de Valencia, sobre el bando que se publicó de la expulsión de los extranjeros de esta provincia, alegando los motivos e imposibilidad de poderlo ejecutar," Yagua and Valencia, AGN, Diversos, Volume 18, Expediente 15, November 24, 1736, folios 193-232.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, folios 205v, 209-210.

appeal, Captain don Juan Antonio Bolaños, collected testimony from prominent local citizens, testimony that attested to two points: first, that Mota was too old and sick to even make the trip to port, let alone the transatlantic trip to Europe; and second, that he had contributed so much to Valencia in the 20 years that he had lived there, that it would be a great loss if he left. Lardizábal ordered him exempt from expulsion.⁷⁶

The highest local authorities—the cabildo's *alcaldes ordinarios*, the Valencia justice of the peace, and the RCG factor in Puerto Cabello—avoided direct involvement in contests in Yagua. The mayors sent the *alcaldes de la Santa Hermandad*, and the justices of the peace assigned *cabos* to the area. The RCG factors had no authority that far inland and had to content themselves with the pressure their corporals and coastal patrols brought on Yagua and the smugglers who used it. The highest-ranking colonial officers in the jurisdiction who involved themselves directly in Yagua were the *corregidores* at Guacara.

Turiamo

Prácticos who worked Valencia's coastline preferred Turiamo for brokering exchanges between Dutch captains and merchants from Curaçao and Venezuelan traders from the coastal valleys and the interior. Its narrow bay was beyond the extent of RCG coastal patrols from Puerto Cabello and infrequently visited by *cabos* operating out of Patanemo. *Prácticos* used the valley not only as a point of exchange but also as a point of access to surrounding coastal valleys and Valencia's interior. Like Yagua on the other

⁷⁶ The testimony is *Ibid.*, folios 200-223v. Lardizábal's December 22, 1736, order is folios 231-232. Aizpurua cites the example of Pedro Vigot, also French, a *boticario* and *cirujano* in Caracas, who was expelled from the province by Lardizábal and then in 1737 allowed to return by the *Consejo de Indias*. Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, p. 137.

side of the mountains, it served as an axis for clandestine activity. Unlike Yagua, Turiamo's commercial activity was almost entirely outside the law.

Despite the obstacles, various authorities tried to impose themselves on the valley, its inhabitants, and the prácticos who frequented it. Nonetheless, smugglers who frequented Turiamo and surrounding valleys usually secured the compliance of some local official. In August of 1735, Pedro Pablo Rodríguez Galeas, a cabo assigned to Patanemo, sent his assistant, Juan Bautista de Torres, with eight men to Turiamo. He captured 3 prácticos who had come ashore from 2 Dutch sloops and were heading up the valley. They were Domingo Montano, from Galicia, Spain, and a resident of Yagua; Juan Joseph Sánchez, a white man originally from Cartagena de las Indias living in the llanos city of San Carlos; and Francisco Gisardo, a free pardo from Maracaibo. Later that same year the RCG factor Joseph de Azcarate assigned Francisco de Fuentes to patrol the valley of Zepe.⁷⁷ Fuentes and his patrol were on their way east from Puerto Cabello to Zepe when in Turiamo they sighted 2 Dutch sloops in the bay and a black man heading east along the shore. Local residents informed them they he was a práctico for the Dutch, so they detained him. They found a knife and 16 pesos 4 reales in his belt. Juan Joseph, a blacksmith who worked on don Cornelio Blanco's foundry in Cata, claimed he was on his way to Ocumare to see his brother in Cata. When Fuentes and his men "pressured" him, he admitted he had come ashore from Captain Muxinche's sloop, at the time

⁷⁷ "Autos sobre haber dado licencia Joseph Ansaldo, siendo guardia en el puerto de Patanemo dijo en el de Turiamo, a un negro, práctico de una balandra holandesa," AGN, Comisos, Volume 16, Expediente 3, folios 52-79v.

anchored in the bay. At any rate, he had permission from the local cabo, Joseph Ansaldo.⁷⁸

Ansaldo, known locally as Patrón Joseph, was a sailor originally from Genoa. He had been temporally transferred from the company's coast guard to the terrestrial patrol at Turiamo.⁷⁹ In January 1736, appearing before Lardizábal in Caracas, he admitted to issuing a license to a black man named Juan Joseph but denied seeing the Dutch ships or knowing the man was a práctico. The captain general determined that Juan Joseph was a threat to peace and order in the province. Without receiving his declaration, confession, or any other juridical statement from Juan Joseph, Lardizábal ordered his deportation to Spain. He sailed from La Guaira on the RCG frigate Santa Ana in February. On April 18, 1736, Lardizábal absolved Ansaldo and ordered his release from the Caracas jail.⁸⁰

In another instance, the pilot Mateo used the Ciénaga de Ocumare, immediately east of Turiamo, to come ashore.⁸¹ The marsh was uninhabited yet strategically located close to the major cacao producing valleys of Ocumare and Patanemo. Olavarriaga complained in his report that blacks carried cacao from neighboring valleys to the marsh, where they delivered it to Dutch traders.⁸² In December of 1736, Mateo, a Venezuelan creole from the province's interior,⁸³ sailed from Curaçao on the Dutch sloop Jan Juong,

⁷⁸ Ibid., folios 55v-56v.

⁷⁹ Ibid., folios 60-61v, 66.

⁸⁰ Ibid., folios 64, 79.

⁸¹ "Inventario de una balandra holandesa de Curaçao que contiene entre otras cosas doce esclavos y que fue apresada en Puerto Cabello," Tucacas and Puerto Cabello, January 11, 1737, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-224-7, folios 1-59.

⁸² He writes, "en este valle hay un camino por donde los negros traen cacao de los valles circunvecinos a los holandeses." Olavarriaga, *Instrucción general y particular*, p. 235.

⁸³ "Un criollo de tierra adentro de Venezuela." "Inventario de una balandra holandesa," folio 11.

captained by Juan de Palo. They put into Zepe, Cata, and Ocumare, where they had traded for cacao. When they were off the Ciénaga, Mateo disembarked and headed inland.

The successful or established traders worked with the support or at least arranged the absence of the cabo assigned to Turiamo and his immediate superior, the juez de comisos for Patanemo and Turiamo.⁸⁴ An ideal arrangement would include accomplices in positions of authority all along the line of trade that extended from the beach at Turiamo, over the mountain trails, through Yagua and Valencia's Indian towns, into the district capital, and out towards its borders with neighboring municipalities. Such integration was rare; more often prácticos and Dutch traders satisfied themselves with a few low-level customs or military officers along the coast. Sometimes this first level of official complicity was arranged ahead of time. Juan Joseph seems to have known Patron Joseph before he arrived in Turiamo that day. Other times, cabos were suborned on the spot. For example, the captain of the sloop that unloaded the three prácticos left a note for Torres with a local Turiamo resident. In it he expressed his respect and affection for Torres and requested that the cabo return the favor.⁸⁵

Patanemo

The official status of the port and the regular presence of either company patrols or the teniente's subalterns did not necessarily mean extra-legal activities were absent from it. Smugglers just had to be more careful or prepared. The valley, besides producing cacao, was very active because of its legal status as a transfer point for travel and

⁸⁴ This second official was usually named by the RCG factor in Puerto Cabello.

⁸⁵ "Autos sobre tres hombres prácticos aprehendidos en el Valle de Patanemo," August 17, 1735, AGN, Comisos, Volume 17, Expediente 7, folios 176-188v. The note is described on folios 177-179 and transcribed on 187-187v.

transport to Puerto Cabello, with loads of tobacco coming from over the mountains and loads of cacao coming in by launch from other coastal valleys. Some took advantage of this in ways that were not condoned under Patanemo's restricted legal trade.

In March of 1739, Pedro de Mares, the patrón of the sloop *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, which plied the Caracas coast collecting cacao, sailed from his home port of La Guaira to Puerto Cabello to pick up some orders. In Puerto Cabello, don Alonso Monteserrín, vecino of Borburata, requested that Mares take him and 160 fanegas of cacao to La Guaira. Mares had already reserved space for 44 fanegas of cacao, and the 160 made a complete load.⁸⁶ Monteserrín loaded 130 fanegas in Puerto Cabello and arranged to meet Mares in Patanemo where he would have the rest. Mares sailed from Puerto Cabello on March 17 and reached Patanemo on the 19th, where Monteserrín was waiting as planned, with 43 fanegas and a guía from the local teniente to load it and send it out. He convinced the captain to allow don Francisco López Armellones and four other men on board as well. Off the Ciénaga de Ocumare Monteserrín and his men violently forced Mares to turn the sloop around and sail for Curaçao. There he sold his cacao to the governor's son and his father-in-law.

Monteserrín lived comfortably in San Esteban, but he was deep in debt. He lived with his wife doña Ursula Catarina Díez de Velasco in an adobe house with a tiled roof, 4 rooms, 6 doors (4 of them with keyed locks), a small building off to the side (perhaps a kitchen), 7 mules, and a horse in San Diego.⁸⁷ All this was impounded by Teniente Rodríguez Correa as part of the criminal investigation against Monteserrín, but Rodríguez

⁸⁶ The 44 fanegas belonged to don Joseph Cardenal, don Tomás García, and don Alonso Blanco.

⁸⁷ "Autos seguidos contra don Alonso Monteserrín y don Francisco López y otros sobre comercio clandestino," Caracas, April 20, 1739, AGN, Comisos, Volume 20, Expediente 3, folios 353v-354v.

Correa found that his possessions had already been impounded twice before. Juan Joseph Matos and Juan Francisco Mejías owed the RCG 219 pesos 6 reales for supplies purchased in Puerto Cabello, and he had vouched for them. When the RCG called the debt in, neither Matos and Mejías nor their backer responded. He also owed the Valencia vicarate for *diezmos* he had failed to collect. Monteserrín in 1738 had purchased the rights to collect the diezmo in Valencia and had failed to turn over his collection. His backer was Bernardo Diez de Velasco.⁸⁸

López Armellones was also having money problems. He had been assigned by Sergeant Major don Andrés Páez de Guevara to assist in diezmos collections, and he too had failed to submit the money. Furthermore, López Armellones was in the process of purchasing Páez de Guevara's 3448-tree cacao plantation in Borburata, but he fell behind in his payments. The lieutenant governor, Licentiate don Domingo López de Urrelo, ordered the property, where López and his wife doña Francisca Joseph Correa had already moved in and were working the plantation, returned to Páez de Guevara.

Justice of the Peace Joseph Luis Felipes and the Forsaken Hitch

Don Joseph Luis Felipes, Governor Zuloaga's justice of the peace and corregidor for Valencia and its Indian towns from 1739 to 1746, came closer than anyone else to putting together a network that would dominate all aspects of smuggling along the Turiamo trail. He served a military-minded governor who sought to expand the powers of central government in Venezuela and consolidate the RCG's command over its export economy. Felipes had 16 cabos spread out over the district of Valencia, the most of any justice of the peace to that date. His tenure in Valencia coincided with the company's

⁸⁸ I assume Bernardo was his father-in-law.

initial push to become the province's leading tobacco dealer, and he developed close relations with the tobacco factor assigned to Puerto Cabello. Tax revenues on tobacco shipped from Valencia to Puerto Cabello rose during this period, as did the number and value of *comisos* arrests. With half the *cabildo* and a good number of previous *alcaldes ordinarios* aligned with him, he exercised tight control over Valencia's small urban area.⁸⁹ As *corregidor*, he enjoyed the privilege of free movement through the Indian town of Guacara, as well as the pressures he could bring on the Indian residents of the town through his role as *corregidor*. He had a man at Yagua and a loyal *cabo* to patrol Patanemo and Turiamo. He also had, though he denied this vigorously, close ties with one of Valencia's most successful *prácticos*, Félix de Ovalle, who according to Felipes' enemies, landed in Patanemo with impunity, crossed over the mountains, and visited Felipes in the *Casas Reales* he had constructed in Valencia. There they made plans for extra-legal exports of tobacco. The one piece that was missing was a solution to the Valencia *cabildo* family feud. The continuing rivalry guaranteed that important municipal officers would use their positions and local influence to undermine other officers or the provincial authorities associated with them.

Felipes, who had the backing of the Páez de Vargas family, almost brought the two clans together. He was to marry doña María Antonia de Lamas of the Rodríguez de Lamas family. But the marriage fell through with each side blaming the other.⁹⁰ Mutual accusations of wrongdoing ensued. These included claims about adultery, physical abuse

⁸⁹ He also had a key ally in the local scribe, don Mateo de Osorio.

⁹⁰ Manuel Santiago de Ochoa, in his testimony said the marriage was "*pactado y trazado*," but then the Lamas brothers decided they did not want their sister to marry Felipes. They stole her away from Valencia and later married her to a *caraqueño*. The Lamas family, in turn, claimed that Felipes changed his mind on the eve of the wedding, rejecting doña María Antonia and insulting the family's good name.

of slaves, abuse of public office, nepotism, and, of course, smuggling. Both sides claimed the other tried to monopolize the clandestine trade through Yagua and Turiamo. Both argued that the other's accusations sprung from resentment of effective efforts to suppress smuggling along the route. The governor and the Crown eventually cleared Felipes of the charges leveled against him, but long after the alliance he had assembled had fallen apart.

Conclusion

The Royal Guipuzcoa Company faced no fierce nor steady attacks from the political and economic elite of Valencia, nor did the governors in Caracas have to trouble themselves much with the Valencia cabildo's overstepping its bounds or trying to limit the governor's authority, as was the case in Caracas. The commercial and administrative reforms of the second quarter of the eighteenth century had real consequences for Valencia and its established ruling class, albeit not necessarily as profound or disturbing as for Caracas and its mantuanos. Valencia's elite benefited to some degree from the company's presence along the Valencia coastline. The company's trade in cacao and efforts to eliminate rivals in the area immediately around Puerto Cabello allowed them to sell fruits from their coastline estates to a consistent buyer. For the first time Valencia's producers had dependable access to the Spanish market. The company's presence also removed from the cabildo the thankless task of countering coastal smuggling operations, particularly those based exclusively out of the coastal valleys. The company's concentration on certain commodities and limited spaces afforded Valencia residents, especially those from the interior, the opportunity to expand what had been a crucial element in the local economy, the transportation and export of tobacco by way of Valencia's second route to the sea. The district and its long-established political

institution, the cabildo, enjoyed less effective defenses against what on outward appearance was a far less formidable new force than the RCG. Over time, the justices of the peace assigned to Valencia managed to extend their authority spatially and juridically, often into areas that had been the formal or informal domain of the cabildo. This potential for wide consolidation of political and economic power, enjoyed by some justices of the peace in certain context, was taken much further in the district of San Felipe.⁹¹ But just west of Valencia, in Nirgua, neither the RCG nor the justices of the peace managed to impose their designs for both commercial practices and political power on what proved to be very effective local resistance to centralizing forces.

⁹¹ The San Felipe case will be discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5 NIRGUA: FEAR OF A PARDO REPUBLIC

A los amigos todo, a los enemigos nada, al extraño la ley.

—Latin American saying¹

Introduction

The geographic and political fragmentation that characterized Valencia impeded the development of smuggling organizations that could hold sway over the entire district. Instead, the three institutions that competed for the upper hand in trade in the area—the Guipuzcoa Company, the justices of the peace, and the Valencia municipal elite—achieved and were satisfied with partial controls. Smuggling certainly was widespread in Valencia. Extra-legal exchanges took place in all of its coastal valleys, but the weakness and mutually offsetting efforts of its multiple political, administrative organizations kept colonial authorities from identifying in Valencia threats to commercial and social order. The most common complaint went against slaves, who were accused of stealing cacao from coastal estates and of maintaining hazardous relationships with traders from Curaçao. Nonetheless, colonial authorities never that claimed the activities and connections attributed to them represented a concerted, unified effort on the part of Valencia's slave population.

¹ Quoted in Susan Rose-Ackerman, "Bribes and Gifts," in Avner Ben-Ner and Louis Putterman, eds., *Economics, Values, and Organization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 304. Rose-Ackerman calls this a "Latin American quip," p. 304 fn 10. In English, "Everything for friends, nothing for enemies, the law for strangers."

Outsiders did perceive such a threat in Nirgua, Valencia's neighbor to the west. They interpreted the political autonomy achieved by the district's free colored majority as both rebelliousness and a tightly coordinated commitment to smuggling. The characterization was an exaggeration, born of fear, prejudice, and competition over resources. In truth, Nirgua exhibited a fragmentation of political power that paralleled Valencia's, however, in contrast to the struggle over smuggling in Valencia, competition over extra-legal trade in Nirgua concentrated on one key space, the Punta de Morón, the site in the district where most smuggled goods entered and exited the province. Nirgua's local political elite managed to exercise exclusive control over one of the routes to this point. Nonetheless, the kinds of consolidated smuggling operations that developed in Caracas and San Felipe did not develop in Nirgua, despite governors' and others' claims to the contrary.

Nirgua was for a long time an interior frontier in the Province of Venezuela. Located where the foothills of the Andes meet the foothills of the Central Coast Range, the area was throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth century an uncontrolled space between the Segovia Highlands and the Valley of San Francisco (Caracas), the two foci of conquest and settlement in the province.

The area was inhabited by the Jirajara Indians, who successfully checked Spanish and creole expansion from the Segovia Highlands for over a century.² Violent

² Nicolás Perazzo, *Historia del Estado Yaracuy* (Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1982), p. 24. José de Oviedo y Baños, the Caracas vecino and cabildo officer who wrote a two-volume history of Venezuela in the 1720s, includes a detailed discussion of this series of frustrated attempts to conquer Nirgua in the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, the second volume of his history, which included his description of Governor Meneses' successful conquest and settlement in 1628, is lost. For a detailed account of the sixteenth-century failures, see José de Oviedo y Baños, *The Conquest and Settlement of Venezuela* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 95-100, 103-104.

entrepreneurs eventually secured colonial control over the region.³ Governor Juan Meneses y Padilla recruited free blacks and mulattoes for his 1620s expedition against the Jirajara. He had received complaints from the Barquisimeto, El Tocuyo, and Valencia cabildos about Indian raids, and after rounding up material support from Caracas residents, he set out in 1625 with his predominantly pardo expeditionary force. The next three years he spent traveling back and forth between Caracas and Nirgua, dividing his time between colonial administration and the front.⁴ In January of 1628, the governor claimed victory, declaring the route between the central valleys of Caracas and Valencia and the Segovia Highlands finally free of hostile Indians.⁵

Previous excursions had not cleared the area of the local indigenous population, either because they lacked the strength to do it or because they intended to establish *encomiendas*. Meneses' force expelled the Jirajaras. Those Indians who were not hung were forcibly transported to Santo Domingo. Meneses' men also destroyed an Indian outpost along the *camino real*, a position from which the Jirajaras had in the past disrupted transport and communication between Caracas and the west of the province.⁶

Governor Meneses was slow to reward the troops for their victory, and they rebelled. Captained by Andrés Román, they demanded the governor grant them land

³ Military entrepreneurs from Gallant, "Brigandage, Piracy, Capitalism, and State-Formation."

⁴ Guillermo Morón, *Historia de la Provincia de Venezuela* (Caracas: Consejo Municipal del Distrito Federal, 1977), p. 374.

⁵ Vaccari San Miguel, *Sobre gobernadores y residencias*, p. 107; Manuel Vicente Magallanes, *Luchas e insurrecciones en la Venezuela colonial* (Caracas: Editorial Nuevo Tiempo, 1972), p. 75; Perazzo, *Historia del Estado Yaracuy*, p. 30.

⁶ Ambrosio Perera, *Historia de la organización de pueblos antiguos de Venezuela*, Volume 3 (Madrid: Juan Bravo, 1964), p. 53 fn 24. Perera cites a government inquiry from 1680: "Información abierta en orden al servicio personal que continuaban prestando los indios en Nirgua," AGN, Sección Indígenas, Tomo 11. Oviedo y Baños, *The Conquest and Settlement of Venezuela*, p. 104, notes Meneses' founding of Nirgua included the "general extermination of the Jirajara race."

titles and initiate steps to found a city.⁷ In their correspondence with the governor, they threatened to turn their expertise in violence against him:

Nosotros hemos conquistado este hermoso suelo con nuestro valor, con nuestra abnegación y nuestros sacrificios. Tú no has traído más que tu espada, ¿y qué vale la espada de un aventurero? Piénsalo con calma y madurez, y ve si tu cabeza está bien asegurada sobre el cuello.⁸

Meneses conceded, and on January 25, 1628, founded the city of Santa María del Prado de Talavera de Nirgua. He also carried out an initial distribution of *solares*. The city's founding vecinos were granted the title of conquistadors, which brought with it some unspecified but highly coveted *fueros* and privileges.⁹ Fearing that a newly founded city and jurisdiction controlled and populated by free blacks and mulattoes would become a refuge for runaway slaves, he reached an agreement with the new city officials wherein they agreed to inform the provincial government in Caracas of any "negro alzado" who sought refuge there.¹⁰

⁷ According to Morón, the rebellion had three leaders: Román, Pedro de Sevilla, and Juan de Casanova. Morón, *Historia de la Provincia de Venezuela*, p. 374.

⁸ Magallanes, *Luchas e insurrecciones*, p. 75, who borrows the quote from Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*, 1964, pp. 123-124. Note the use of the familiar pronoun.

⁹ Perera, *Historia de la organización*, p. 76, writes that the Crown confirmed the privileges granted by Governor Meneses, but he does not indicate when. See also José Gil Fortoul, *Historia constitucional de Venezuela*, Volume 1 (Caracas: Librería Piñango, 1967 [1909]), p. 98, who notes that the Crown granted the vecinos of Nirgua the title of "fieles y leales súbditos" but provides no further information. Irma Mendoza lists the privileges granted the soldiers as "condición de hijo-dalgos, vecinos de solar conocido, mercedes de tierras en forma justa y equitativa tomando en cuenta el aporte a la campaña bélica, encomiendas por tres vidas, derecho a ejercer cargos edilicios." Irma Marina Mendoza, "El cabildo de pardos de Nirgua, siglos XVII y XVIII," *Anuario de Estudios Bolivarianos* 4:4 (1995), p. 97.

¹⁰ Magallanes, *Luchas e insurrecciones*, p. 76. This kind of deal, under which the colonial government recognized the legitimacy of free black or maroon settlements in exchange for a commitment to police and exclude runaways, was common throughout the Caribbean, whatever the colonial power. See, for a comparative analysis, Scott V. Parris, "Alliance and Competition: Four Case Studies of Maroon-European Relations," *New West Indian Guide* 55:3 & 4 (1981), pp. 174-224.

Nirgua was bordered to the north by the Caribbean Sea (actually the Golfo Triste), to the east by the jurisdiction of Valencia, to the south by the jurisdictions of San Carlos and Pao, and to the west by San Felipe (see Figure 5).¹¹

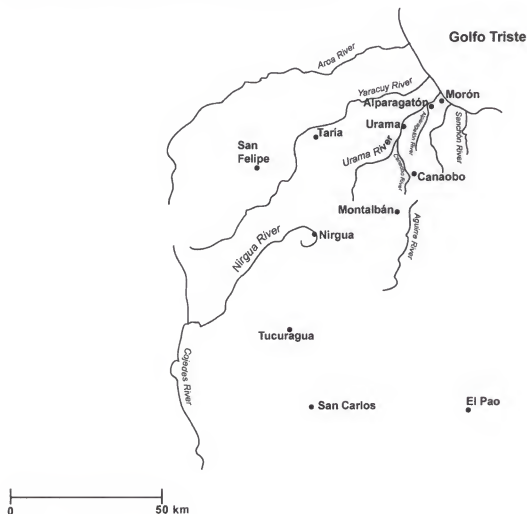


Figure 5. The District of Nirgua

¹¹ Cisneros, *Descripción exacta*, p. 147. Until 1680, the jurisdiction of Nirgua included the llanos south of the city. That year the Crown separated off lands south of the Cojedes River to form the jurisdiction of the Villa de San Carlos de Austria. See Real Cédula, Madrid, February 11, 1680, from AGI, Santo Domingo, 221, summarized as Document 370 in Enrique Marco Dorta, *Materiales para la historia de la cultura en Venezuela (1523-1828)* (Caracas: Fundación John Boulton, 1967), p. 63.

The city itself was located near the edge of Mount Picacho in the western extreme of the coastal range.¹² To the north were the mountain paths that led to Nirgua's coastal plain; to the east, the pass through Montalbán that led to Valencia and the province's central valleys; to the south of Picacho, the llanos; and to the west, the Segovia Highlands. Along the coast Nirgua's eastern border with Valencia was marked by the Sanchón River, and its western border by the Yaracuy River. The border with San Carlos and el Pao was delineated by the Cojedes River.¹³

Patterns of Production and Settlement

Nirgua retained many of its frontier qualities well into the eighteenth century. The municipal capital was a city in name only. The permanent members of the cabildo, while they owned solares in the city and participated in the council's major annual functions, lived and owned lands elsewhere. They spent their time away from the capital, along the coast, on critical points along major trade routes, or ideally, in places that combined the two.¹⁴ Some spent their time in the San Felipe area, taking advantage of the booming cacao economy there. The land around the municipal capital was not suitable for cacao cultivation. It supported almost every other crop commonly grown in the province:

¹² Altolaguirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, p. 57.

¹³ AGN, Misiones, Tomo 2, Expediente 5, "Buría, los Padres Capuchinos Misioneros pretenden fundar el pueblo diez leguas de Barquisimeto," May 3, 1751, folios 155-178., especially folios 175-175v, which include a description of Nirgua's borders. Nirgua claimed a piece of the llanos known as the Sabana de Londres, which bordered on the Cojedes River. Barquisimeto also claimed the territory as part of its jurisdiction, and both cities claimed the Capuchin mission of Buría, located on this plain, to be part of their respective jurisdictions. The jurisdictional squabbles continued into the 1770s. See AGN, Gobernación y Capitanía General, Tomo 13, Documento 72, "Copia de un oficio (dirigido desde la iglesia de Buría) del Teniente de Justicia Mayor de Nirgua para don Miguel de Torres, Alcalde de Barquisimeto," April 3, 1773, folios 109-110; and AGN, Gobernación y Capitanía General, Tomo 13, Documento 73, "Copia de un oficio del nuncio al Cabildo de Barquisimeto," April 4, 1773, folios 111-112v.

¹⁴ This was the case especially in the second half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries.

maize, manioc, sugar cane, cotton, and tobacco,¹⁵ but the Nirgua River Valley was too high, dry, and cool to support the main cash crop of the period.¹⁶

The district's coastal valleys, on the other hand, did support cacao cultivation, and it thrived there. In the 1720s, the jurisdiction ranked third behind its larger, richer neighbors to the east—Caracas and Valencia—in terms of total annual cacao yield. In part this was because cacao production came to the Nirgua coast after it had developed along the Caracas coast, but also because Nirgua boasted fewer suitable valleys than Caracas and Valencia. The city of Nirgua governed a very small strip of coastline that measured 15 kilometers from the Sanchón River to the Yaracuy and was dominated by the Punta de Morón. The area's valleys, when their production is considered individually, compared favorably with those to the east. For example, according to Olavarriaga, the cacao estates of the Valley of Morón had in 1720 a total of 174,000 trees that produced 1740 fanegas of cacao yearly.¹⁷ By comparison, the Obra Pía de Chuao, in the valley of that name, had according to Olavarriaga's calculation, 70,000 trees that produced 700 fanegas each year.¹⁸ According to Olavarriaga, Nirgua's cacao-producing settlements in the 1720s were:

Morón with 174,000 trees
San José de Canoabo with 77,400 trees

¹⁵ Altolaguirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, p. 60. This is the "Relación" by Don Juan de Salas, capitán de tropa arreglada, who carried out his inspection between December 1, 1764, and March 25, 1765.

¹⁶ The modern city of Nirgua is located 762 meters above sea level. Altolaguirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, p. 589, fn 1. For the ideal conditions for cacao cultivation, see Dauril Alden, "The Significance of Cacao Production in the Amazon Region During the Late Colonial Period: An Essay in Comparative Economic History," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 120:2 (1976), pp. 103-135.

¹⁷ Olavarriaga, *Instrucción general y particular*, p. 245. Olavarriaga's calculation is based on a rate of one fanega per one-hundred trees.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 229. See Arcila Fariás et al., *La Obra Pía de Chuao*, and the above chapter on Caracas.

Valle de Yaracuy with 81,900 trees¹⁹
 Valle de Cabria with 53,500 trees
 Valle de Urama with 144,000 trees
 Valle de Alpargatón with 34,300 trees

Olavarriaga calculated a total of 565,100 cacao trees in the Nirgua area, with an annual yield of 5651 fanegas.²⁰ The *juez inspector* placed Caracas jurisdiction's annual fanega total at 33,161.5, and that of Valencia at 12,834.²¹ Nirgua included some of the province's largest plantations. Don Pedro de Aponte's property in Morón had 60,000 trees. This was typical of Morón, as cacao production there was dominated by four huge estates. Olavarriaga again provides the data: Besides Aponte, both don Antonio Mendoza and don Miguel Rengifo had 40,000-tree *haciendas*. Don Bernardo del Toro's hacienda had 30,000. Olavarriaga wrote that the remaining 4000 trees were owned by "different individuals in the Palma Sola" area.²² The Valley of Urama was also characterized by large haciendas. Of the nine that Olavarriaga identifies, seven had at least 13,000 trees. Two at least 20,000: don Martín Ascanio's plantation of 24,000 trees and don Juan Blanco Infante's of 20,000.²³

Nirgua was unique in the Province of Caracas because men of color dominated its cabildo. The descendants of the first cabildo officers staunchly defended the offices and titles their predecessors had secured. Over the course of the eighteenth century the province's population as a whole moved in Nirgua's direction: towards a pardo

¹⁹ I assume "the Valley of Yaracuy" stands for the string of settlements that extended along the east side of the Yaracuy River.

²⁰ Olavarriaga, *Instrucción general y particular*, pp. 263-266.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 256, 261.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 245.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

majority.²⁴ Demographic dominance did not translate into political power, as white political elites across the colony successfully staved off pardo attempts against their rule. Nirgua stood alone as the only exception to this. This was noted and resented by white creoles and peninsulares in Caracas and elsewhere.²⁵

There is no reliable demographic study of Nirgua in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The only systematic review of colonial Venezuelan demography is Lombardi's survey of the last few decades of the colonial period.²⁶ Nonetheless, the scant data that do exist consistently show pardo prevalence over time. The slave population was restricted, the white population negligible, and the Indian population almost nonexistent.²⁷ Cisneros, in his 1764 description of the province, estimated the jurisdiction's total population to be 20,000 "souls."²⁸ No other observer calculated or guessed so high. A year later, don Juan de Salas, in his *relación geográfica*, tabulated the population of each of Nirgua's settlement. He found a total population of 7,062.²⁹ A report submitted to the viceroy of New Granada that same year put the total population that year at 7,191.³⁰ In his report, Salas indicated the pardo population for 7 of the 15 Nirgua settlements he listed. In the municipal capital, out of a total population of 2076,

²⁴ John V. Lombardi, *People and Places in Colonial Venezuela* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 67-75.

²⁵ Mendoza, "El cabildo de pardos de Nirgua," 95-120; Torcuato Manzo Núñez, "Montalbán, hijo de la pugna racial," *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* 52:248 (1979), pp. 621-639.

²⁶ Besides Lombardi's work, the only demographic study of eighteenth-century Venezuela has been Juan Alméjida Bermúdez's *La familia en la Provincia de Venezuela* (Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992).

²⁷ Montalbán was the only exception to this pattern.

²⁸ Cisneros, *Descripción exacta*, p. 147.

²⁹ Altolaguirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, pp. 60-74.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 59 fn 1.

2009 were pardos. In Canoabo, 813 of 953 inhabitants were pardos; in Tucuragua, 423 out of 529. in Alpagatón, 286 of 304. The Nirgua data recorded in Lombardi's study of parish records span the years 1781 to 1821. They show that the pattern remained the same over the eighteenth century and up to the eve of independence.

Free blacks and mulattoes populated the jurisdiction, with a handful of whites distributed in the larger settlements of Nirgua, Urama, and Tucuragua, and slaves concentrated in the centers of cacao production—Canoabo and Urama. It should be noted that Morón, which according to Olavarriaga was the jurisdiction's biggest cacao producing valley, had a scant population. Salas' survey identified 173 total residents, and parish records from the turn of the century indicate an 1804 population of 297, of which 163 were listed as pardos and 127 as slaves.³¹ Pardos again predominated. Morón's low population contrasts with the high amount of commercial activity that occurred at and around the Punta de Morón, to be discussed below.

Pardo political dominance was not the only reason whites kept away. Nirgua was not a healthy place for them, especially along the coast. Travelers and colonial officials, in their accounts and reports, noted the prevalence of disease. In 1692 a smallpox epidemic broke out at Morón.³² In 1754, the bishop of Venezuela, Doctor don Francisco Julián de Antolino, issued a *despacho circular* to all parishes in the bishopric, instructing them to inform him on the "literatura, edad, costumbres, y antigüedad" of the bishopric's priests. Don Lázaro Ignacio de Paiba, the Nirgua parish priest, reported that Nirgua had eleven active priests, but that many of them could not fulfill their religious duties because

³¹ Altolaquirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, pp. 68-69; Lombardi, *People and Places*, p. 206. The 7 that remained were listed as negros.

³² Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*, p. 187.

they were often sick.³³ Cisneros in 1764 characterized Nirgua as hot and humid and its inhabitants as suffering “enfermedades pertáticas, y agudas.”³⁴ Salas in his 1765 relación described “almost all” the residents of the Valley of Santa María as pale (“descolorida”).³⁵ He also commented that buboes (*bubas*) and syphilis (*gálico*) were prevalent in the valley.³⁶ Humboldt wrote that miasmas plagued the Yaracuy and Aroa Valleys and described Urama, Morón, Cabria, and Alpargatón in Nirgua and San Nicolás in San Felipe as extremely unhealthy.³⁷ The broad coastal plain shared by Nirgua and San Felipe was characterized by frequent flooding. Friar Antonio Rivas, when he was in San Felipe collecting alms for the Virgen de la Candelaria in the Canary Islands, got stuck on the road between San Nicolás (San Felipe) and Urama (Nirgua) during the rainy season. In January of 1734 Rivas left San Nicolás for Urama to collect a promise to the virgin. He made it about 2 to 3 leagues east of San Nicolás when flooding impeded his traveling further. He had to wait ten days at the hacienda Macaquita before Juan Angel de Larrea, San Felipe’s justice of the peace, sent some of his men with a canoe to take Rivas across the Eneal marsh.³⁸

³³ “Solicitud que hace Lázaro Ignacio de Paiba, cura rector, de información sobre la nómina de curas y eclesiásticos, detallando literatura, edad, costumbres, y antigüedad de cada uno,” September 7, 1754, AHAC, Judiciales, Signatura 26-15, folio 1v.

³⁴ Cisneros, *Descripción exacta*, p. 146.

³⁵ Altolaguirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, p. 62.

³⁶ Ibid. The only place Salas described as healthy was the valley of Canoabo. He reached this conclusion based on the fact that no burials were registered there in the year 1764. “El valle es muy sano de manera que el año pasado de 64 no hubo ningún entierro.” Ibid, p. 69.

³⁷ Alexander van Humboldt, *Viaje a las regiones equinocciales del nuevo continente*, Volume 3 (Caracas: Biblioteca Venezolana de Cultura, 1941), p. 182. He also mentions a place called Carabinas, which I have yet to locate.

³⁸ “Sobre comercio ilícito contra el Reverendo Padre Fray Antonio Rivas,” AHAC, Judiciales, Signatura 28-4, February 14, 1734, folios 7, 18, 20-20v.

The combination of this political anomaly and demographic imbalance produced among settlers and colonial officials outside of Nirgua a distrust of nirgüños and a tendency to exaggerate the cohesiveness among Nirgua's pardo and black population. Some nirgüños also repeated these arguments, especially those who did not identify themselves with the pardo majority.³⁹

The pueblo of Montalbán was somewhat the exception to the demographic pattern. The Pueblo de la Inmaculada Concepción de Nuestra Señora de Montalbán was, according to Perera, a *pueblo de españoles*.⁴⁰ Founded in the 1730s,⁴¹ it included a substantial number of whites. Eighteenth-century observers consistently identified a third of the town's population as white. Salas, in 1765, counted 264 whites, 334 pardos, and 240 slaves.⁴² Parish records from 1781 indicate the following: a total population of 1525 composed of 576 whites, 621 pardos and free blacks, 272 slaves, and 56 Indians.⁴³ Like the coastal valleys of Urama and Canoabo, Montalbán had a large slave population; unlike these places, Montalbán did not support cacao cultivation, and tobacco was its

³⁹ The tendency to exaggerate the threat posed by slave uprisings and free colored rebellions was common to all Spanish American colonies with sizable African and African-American populations. Olavarriaga, in his report, claimed the province of Venezuela had more than 20,000 runaway slaves. See Miguel Acosta Saignes, *Vida de los esclavos negros en Venezuela* (Valencia: Vadell Hermanos, 1984), pp. 263-296. For late colonial Venezuela, particularly the llanos, see Miguel Izard, *El miedo a la revolución, 1777-1830* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1979); and idem, "Ni cuatreros ni montoneros, llaneros," *Boletín Americanista* 31 (1981), pp. 83-142. For examples from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Guatemala, see Paul Thomas Lokken, "From Black to Ladino: People of African Descent, Mestizaje, and Racial Hierarchy in Rural Colonial Guatemala, 1600-1730" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 2000), pp. 52-73.

⁴⁰ Perera, *Historia de la organización*, p. 54.

⁴¹ Montalbán probably did not exist before 1732, as the settlement does not figure in the census taken by Governor García de la Torre in 1732 in the wake of the Andresote uprising. See Document 2, "Padrón," in Carlos Felice Cardot, *La rebelión de Andresote (Valles del Yaracuy, 1730-1733)* (Bogotá: Editorial ABC, 1957), pp. 63-84.

⁴² Altolaguirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, pp. 66-67.

⁴³ Lombardi, *People and Places*, Table I, Montalbán, p. 206.

principal cash crop. Salas reported that in 1759 the town produced 300 cargass of tobacco, which sold for 23 pesos per carga. He also wrote that the area produced sugar and supported cattle and mule breeding.⁴⁴

It is not clear how and exactly when Montalbán was populated. It is clear that whites, peninsulares from Spain and creoles from Coro, Caracas, Barquisimeto, or the Andes, did not settle in the rest of Nirgua. Those whites who participated in the subjugation and removal of the Jirajara Indians seem to have left shortly after the conquest and some may have relocated to the Montalbán area.⁴⁵ Given that Montalbán was Nirgua's eastern-most hamlet, that it was settled late, and the fact that it was located along the mountain pass between Nirgua and the Valley of Valencia, it is possible that Montalbán's white colonists migrated west from Valencia. Many of them were probably Canary Island immigrants who had difficulty establishing themselves in the Aragua and Valencia areas and so headed west where land was still available.⁴⁶ One thing is clear: by the late eighteenth century the residents of Montalbán wanted to free themselves from the Nirgua cabildo. In the 1770s they petitioned the governor and the Crown to grant Montalbán the status of *villa*, which would bring some degree of autonomy through a cabildo and would include a territorial jurisdiction. The town's representatives in the campaign, don Bernardino Pinto and don José Tortolero, were forceful on this last point. They suggested the new jurisdiction include Canoabo, Morón, Alpargatón, and Urama,

⁴⁴ Altolaguirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, pp. 66-67.

⁴⁵ This would include villages like Otono, Sabanas Altas, and Agua de Obispo.

⁴⁶ Besides the brief discussion (pp. 50-55) in Perera's chapter on Nirgua in *Historia de la organización*, the only work I have found so far that examines the pueblo de Montalbán is Pedro Bacalao Silva, *Orígenes y referencias de Montalbán. El centenario de Bejuma* (1949), cited in Perera, *Historia de la organización*, p. 50 fn 50.

which would have divorced Nirgua from its cacao-producing coastal strip.⁴⁷ Later the Conde de Tovar of Caracas offered to help secure royal confirmation of the villa title.⁴⁸ The vecinos of Montalbán also sought to free ecclesiastic government from Nirgua: in 1776, Tortolero petitioned the Crown to establish a church in Montalbán that would be independent of Nirgua's.⁴⁹ By June of 1783, Montalbán had been granted the status of villa, though its vecinos were not awarded the coastal lands they had hoped to govern.⁵⁰

Nirgua as Seen from Without

Like Montalbán's white residents, colonial officials and vecinos outside of Nirgua generally held nirguñenos, and especially its municipal elite, in disregard. Nirgua's pardo majority was considered and stereotyped as lazy, untrustworthy, violent, and rebellious. They were blamed for the Andresote uprising and the widespread smuggling in and around Nirgua jurisdiction.⁵¹ A common complaint was that the rights, privileges, and titles bestowed by the Crown on Nirgua's founders made their descendants feel they

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 53-54. "El pueblo del Valle de Montalbán, en la provincia de Venezuela, pide se le haga villa con el nombre de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción de Montalbán," Madrid, October 7, 1775, from AGI, Indiferente General, 1610, included as Document 2211 in Marco Dorta, *Materiales para la historia de la cultura*, p. 337.

⁴⁸ Perera, *Historia de la organización*, p. 53.

⁴⁹ "Don Prudencio Tortolero, vecino del Valle de Montalbán, territorio y jurisdicción de la ciudad de Nirgua, en la provincia de Caracas, en nombre de los demás vecinos, expone cómo se ha desarrollado dicha villa por lo que es necesario erigir una iglesia independiente de las de Nirgua y Valencia," December 14, 1776, from AGI, Caracas, 239, included as Document 2268 in Marco Dorta, *Materiales para la historia de la cultura*, p. 345.

⁵⁰ Perera, *Historia de la organización*, p. 54. It is ironic, given Montalbán's discomfort with Nirgua political dominance, that don Manuel Santiago de Ochoa, the Nirgua justice of the peace who successfully collaborated with Nirgua cabildos during the 1730s and 1740s, resided permanently in Montalbán.

⁵¹ In June of 1731, Andresote and others were transporting goods along the Yaracuy River when they were confronted by a RCG patrol. They refused to recognize the patrol's authority and successfully fended off an attempt to force them to submit. Colonial officials identified Andresote as the leader of various bands of smugglers, runaway slaves, and pardos who managed to keep local and provincial forces in check until 1733. For descriptions of Andresote's rebellion, see Felice Cardot, *La rebelión de Andresote*, pp. 37-88; idem, "Rebelión de Andresote," in Manuel Pérez Vila, ed., *Diccionario de historia de Venezuela* (Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1988), volume 3, pp. 305-306; and Magallanes, *Luchas e insurrecciones*, pp. 102-104.

enjoyed greater liberties and powers than what was normal or necessary in other jurisdictions. Salas' report reflects a common, unsympathetic position. In 1765 he wrote,

Generalmente, todos sus habitantes envanecidos con sus hidalguías y Cedulones Reales juzgan igualarse a otro qualquiera de respeto y autoridad; viviendo por esta vana gloria en suma y continua ociosidad; de tal modo, que no se encuentra en la ciudad, ni en todos sus contornos un artífice de ningún arte ni oficio, porque juzgan ignorantemente que los envilece y priva de ser alcaldes y tener luego el vano título de capitulares, y esta es la verdadera causa de ser todos pobres y miserables.⁵²

Humboldt offered the argument that Nirgua was historically a site of pardo rebellion, linking the late colonial cabildo to a sixteenth-century slave uprising. In 1553 Miguel, a slave in the Buría copper mines, led a revolt by African and Indian mine workers. He declared himself king, named his cohabitant Guiomar queen, appointed his court, and proclaimed an independent kingdom. Miguel's brief rule ended when he led an ill-advised attack on Barquisimeto.⁵³ For Humboldt, pardo predominance in Nirgua hearkened back to Miguel's failed reign:

A esta monarquía africana siguió en Nirgua una *república de zambos*, descendientes de negros y de indios. Toda la municipalidad o cabildo se ha formado con gente parda, a la que el rey de España dió el título de *sus fieles y leales súbditos, los Zambos de Nirgua*.⁵⁴

According to Humboldt, whites found Nirgua's pardo predominance contradictory to their "objectives" and therefore stayed away from the jurisdiction. He also claimed

⁵² Altolaquirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, p. 61.

⁵³ Magallanes, *Luchas e insurrecciones*, pp. 36-39; Oviedo y Baños, *The Conquest and Settlement of Venezuela*, pp. 96-98; and Ermila Troconis de Veracoechea, "Rebelión del Negro Miguel," in Pérez Vila, ed., *Diccionario de historia de Venezuela*, Volume 3, pp. 309-310.

⁵⁴ Humboldt, *Viaje a las regiones equinocciales*, p. 184. The italics are in the original. They would appear to indicate quotations, but no source is cited. Nor does the author indicate when the king of Spain granted this title to the residents of Nirgua. It should be noted that Humboldt, writing at the beginning of the eighteenth century, would have a different understanding of "república" than earlier commentators.

that colonial subjects outside of Nirgua made fun of it, calling it "the republic of zambos and mulattoes."⁵⁵ Gil Fortoul, following Humboldt, also noted how others ridiculed Nirgua's pardo majority: "fue general el escarnio para la 'república de zambos y mulatos.'"⁵⁶

Negative assessments of nirguenses also came from colonial officials as a result of their direct dealings with the local populace. Governor Betancourt had repeated confrontations with the Nirgua cabildo, especially over his attempt to impose a single, unified anti-smuggling corps throughout the province, under the direction of Juez General de Comisos don Diego de Matos.⁵⁷ When in 1719 Alcalde Ordinario Diego de Mesa brought charges against Matos for alleged abuse of power, Governor Betancourt immediately dismissed the allegations, attributing them to the perennial intrigues of those who lived in the interior ("tierra adentro"):

de que [Mesa's suit] se infiere lo uno la gran facilidad que hay en tierra adentro de justificar lo que se desea y lo otro, que estos hombres toman los oficios de justicia para excusar sus delitos, y los de sus parientes, y compadres, y desvanecen el castigo de ellos.⁵⁸

Matos attacked the Nirgua alcalde and the witnesses he had called, claiming that with the exception of Estefanía de la Cruz and her son, none of the people summoned by

⁵⁵ Ibid. "Pocas familias de blancos quieren habitar un país donde predomina un régimen tan contrario a sus pretensiones, y la pequeña ciudad es llamada por mofa *la república de zambos y mulatos*. Tanta imprudencia es para el gobierno favorecer a una sola casta, como aislarla privándola de sus derechos naturales." Emphasis is in the original.

⁵⁶ Gil Fortoul, *Historia constitucional*, p. 98. The author does not cite his quotation nor indicate when the king granted the title (nor if it cost the vecinos of Nirgua anything). Magallanes also depends on Humboldt's analysis for his discussion of the general rejection and ridicule Nirgua suffered. Magallanes, *Luchas e insurrecciones*, p. 76.

⁵⁷ This is discussed in Chapter 3.

⁵⁸ "Autos del descamino de contrabando introducido por Francisco Marín, efectuado por Diego de Matos, comisionado del gobernador," AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-10-4, folio 145.

Mesa had been present when the alleged abuse of power occurred. Matos not only dismissed them as credible witnesses but also doubted their fealty to the Spanish Crown:

porque todos no se hallaron presentes sino fue Estefanía de la Cruz, y su hijo; gente extra ordinaria y vagamunda, negros mulatos, y zambos, ni que de ellos tengan otro exercio que vivir en las playas siendo todos más amigos de los holandeses que de servicio del Rey nuestro señor y sus ministros.⁵⁹

Elsewhere, Matos added:

y porque todos los falsos testigos, que fueran examinados por dicho Diego de Mesa son personas viles, y bajas, zambos, y negros sin tener ninguna de las calidades que en tales casos dispone el derecho.⁶⁰

Matos had particularly harsh words for Mesa: "él, y los suyos viviendo licenciamiente en sus comercios ilícitos amando más él y ellos los tratos holandeses que el servicio del Rey."⁶¹

That same year Governor Betancourt, faced with the Nirgua cabildo's rejection of his newly appointed teniente for Morón and Agua Caliente, blasted the municipal officers and their supporters for what he claimed was their recurring machinations to keep Morón free of authority. From Betancourt's point of view, this strategy allowed them to impose their own rule on the smuggling center, which translated, in the governor's opinion, into complete tolerance of it.⁶²

Low-ranking colonial officials, usually whites from outside of Nirgua, also blamed widespread smuggling on the nirguñeos' color and character. Captain don Ambrosio Fernández Bello, *cabo a guerra* in charge of patrolling Morón, stood accused in the fall

⁵⁹ Ibid., folios 247v-248.

⁶⁰ Ibid., folio 407.

⁶¹ Ibid., folios 410-410v.

⁶² "Sobre suspensión del empleo de teniente y justicia mayor de Nirgua a don Juan de la Rocha," AGN, Empleados de la Colonia, Volume 3, Expediente 3, folio 47.

of 1733 of collaborating with Irish sea captain Juan Blanco to smuggle arms, munitions, and textiles from Curaçao into Venezuela through Morón. In a missive to Lardizábal, Fernández Bello attacked the credibility of Nirgua justice of the peace Ochoa and all other Nirgua inhabitants.⁶³ The fact that most of Nirgua's vecinos were mulattoes meant, for Fernández Bello, that they were more inclined not only to lie, but also to conspire when lying about their enemies. They were organized liars by nature. And since Fernández Bello opposed their dealings with the Dutch, that made him a principal enemy. He also raised a recurring issue in the struggles over smuggling: poverty and its consequences. In this case, the cabo claimed the extreme destitution of Nirgua's residents made them "corruptible"—easily swayed to support powerful patrons' causes, in this case that of his enemy, Ochoa.⁶⁴

The frustration and anger expressed by Governor Betancourt and others was common for governors when dealing with Nirgua. Conflicts over appointments, jurisdictional limits, obedience, and authority characterized the relationship between the governor and the local elite in the early eighteenth century. The governors disparaged Nirgua's inhabitants, issued stern warnings and threats, and fined municipal officers and

⁶³ "Causa criminal sobre comercios ilícitos en las costas de esta provincia remitidos al tribunal del Señor Comandante General por don Domingo Aróstegui con las personas de Juan Blanco de nación irlandesa, Francisco Lorenzo Carambeo, Juan Pascual Miquilarena, y don Ambrosio Villo, cabo a guerra y Juez de Comisos del Valle de Morón," September 17, 1733, AGN, Comisos, Volume 14, Expediente 3, folios 201v-201bis-v.

⁶⁴ Similar arguments were made in Carora at roughly the same time. Ignacio de Basazábal, the *teniente de justicia mayor*, came into conflict during Basazábal's *residencia* with Don Domingo Alvarado Franco, a descendent of one of Carora's first settlers and a regular the city's *cabildo*. The two men exchanged insults. Basazábal claimed Alvarado Franco manipulated public opinion in Carora, something relatively easy to do, he said, since most Carora inhabitants were "poor and ignorant . . . low class people of color." The case is "Querrela ocurrida entre don Domingo Alvarado Franco, Alguacil Mayor del Santo Oficio de la ciudad de Carora y don Ignacio Basazábal, Teniente Justicia Mayor, Cabo a Guerra y Juez de Comisos de aquella jurisdicción, por cuestiones de prerrogativas," Carora, December 10, 1737, in AGN, *Ayuntamientos*, Tomo 4, folios 329-340v. It is summarized in Quintero, *El teniente justicia mayor*, pp. 323-325.

vecinos. All these strategies failed to diminish the perceived independence and irreverence with which nirgüefios acted.

Local Autonomy and the Limits of Authority

Nirgua's prominent residents defended staunchly the exceptions and privileges they claimed their ancestors had secured. Don Lázaro Ignacio de Paiba, for his 1754 report on the clerics who served the Nirgua area, solicited testimony from four "principal" vecinos of Nirgua, men who owned property, held posts on the cabildo, and served as militia officers. Captain Joseph Fernando Salamanca, Captain Alonso Hernández de Villanueva, Captain Juan Rumaldo de Sequera, and Regidor Feliciano Hernández identified themselves as either "personas principales" or "personas de distinción."⁶⁵ All four "enjoyed conquistador's privileges,"⁶⁶ although none had been born before 1690.⁶⁷

What these privileges were exactly is not clear. Nor is it clear what exactly the Crown granted the city's founders or how their *fueros* differed from those given to any other city in the Indies. Missing is the *real cédula* which would have confirmed the city status awarded by Governor Meneses.⁶⁸ In any case, two points should be made regardless of what happened in the 1620s. One, that this was a city dominated by pardos, and everyone, at all levels, recognized this. Two, that long after the conquest had ended,

⁶⁵ "Solicitud que hace Lázaro Ignacio de Paiba," folios 2, 6, 10, 14v.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., folios 6, 10, 14v, 18v. When they appeared before Paiba, Salamanca was 55-years old, Villanueva 63, Sequera 56, and Hernández 62.

⁶⁸ Only the Crown could grant the title of city.

the descendents of these first nirgüños took their forefathers' rights and titles very seriously, defending them staunchly and bringing them to bear repeatedly.⁶⁹

The autonomy nirgüños enjoyed and defended caused little stir during the seventeenth century. For the colonial government, Nirgua existed to guarantee communications and movement between Caracas and Barquisimeto. So long as this was secure nirgüño autonomy did not threaten the governors of Venezuela or other prominent figures. By the eighteenth century Nirgua's role in the province had changed. It continued to control the important route that joined the central valleys and the Segovia Highlands. Additionally, Nirgua's cacao production and smuggling had expanded dramatically by the 1720s, as evidenced by Olavarriaga's assessment of local estates' annual yields and changes in confiscation patterns beginning in the 1720s. Struggles to control the movement of cacao and other goods through the area frequently found expression through confrontation between provincial and municipal authorities. The governor in Caracas certainly had butted heads with Nirgua's cabildo members before the 1720s (see the Lizarralde case below), but by the end of the decade it had become common for governors to fine nirgüño municipal office holders for failing to respect provincial authority. In May of 1729 don Manuel Bernardo Alvarez, lawyer for the Real Consejo serving as auditor general in Venezuela, fined seven men from Nirgua 70 pesos for causing a ruckus in that city.⁷⁰ In December of 1734 Commander General Martín de Lardizábal fined Antonio Joseph de la Mota 400 pesos for having purchased imported

⁶⁹ Nirgüños, when pressed by outsiders, could not present the royal decree, or a copy of it, that granted them the privileges they claimed. But, as Mendoza notes, the Crown consistently backed the Nirgua cabildo on the issue. Mendoza, "El cabildo de pardos de Nirgua," pp. 95-120, especially pp. 102, 113, 119.

⁷⁰ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, Volume 47, May 7, 1729, folios 155-155v. The seven were Joseph Cipriano, Juan Agustín Fernández, Alonso Hernández, Antonio Felipe de León, Bernardo Isidro de Peralta, Joseph Ascencio Quirós, and Lázaro de Sevilla.

black slaves illegally.⁷¹ Two years later, in November of 1736, Lardizábal again fined De la Mota, who was now *alcalde ordinario* of Nirgua, 30 pesos for contempt of the Nirgua justice of the peace.⁷²

The conflict was not specific to particular governors or particular cabildo officers. Lardizábal finished his term in 1737. Gabriel Zuloaga then assumed the governorship and inherited from Lardizábal, just as Lardizábal had from his predecessor, a latent, insolvable conflict with Nirgua. The Real Hacienda deposits in Caracas reflect this. In an auto of March 2, 1739, Governor Zuloaga fined various prominent members of the cabildo—the *capitulares*—200 total pesos and ordered Juan Angel de Larrea, *teniente de justicia mayor* of San Felipe, to collect the sum.⁷³ In December of 1744, he fined don Eugenio de Salazar y Gómez, *alcalde ordinario* of Nirgua in 1739, 30 pesos for failing to heed the governor's order to hear an appeal.⁷⁴ Finally, in April of 1751, the Nirgua justice of the peace, Don Francisco Chastre, fined Don Joseph Andrés de Soto 100 pesos for killing Joseph de Salas.⁷⁵ Chastre determined Soto was guilty of fatally shooting Salas, who had come from San Carlos to Nirgua to inspect troops.⁷⁶

⁷¹ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, Volume 51, January 19, 1735, folio 189.

⁷² AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, July 10, 1737, folios 126-126v.

⁷³ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, March 5, 1739, folios 123-123v.

⁷⁴ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, December 15, 1744, folios 116-116v. The case, brought by Don Francisco Gómez de Figueroa, involved a house in the Valley of Cabria.

⁷⁵ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, April 30, 1751, folio 105.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, "por haber muerto de un balazo a Joseph de Salas, natural de Valle de San Carlos, habiendo ido a pasar revista de armas."

Nirgua, as Juan de Salas commented in his 1765 relación, was a municipal capital in name only, and its municipal officers turned its apparent abandon and isolation to their advantage.⁷⁷ Its principal residents lived elsewhere, closer to the cacao plantations and informal ports on the coast and along important trade routes. Nirgua's political elite used these circumstances to pressure the governor-appointed justices of the peace. By law all colonial officers appointed by the governor to serve in the province's various jurisdictions were required to present themselves before the local cabildo. They could not assume their positions until the municipal council had received the governor's orders and accepted them.⁷⁸ If they did not follow the established procedures, Nirgua's cabildo officers refused to recognize their authority and encouraged Nirgua's vecinos to do the same. Their strategy was to force a local equivalent of what sometimes happened in Caracas: in the absence of the governor, the cabildo provisionally assumed the governor's responsibilities until the Crown named a permanent replacement.⁷⁹ This happened repeatedly: in 1719 the alcaldes and the Nirgua justice of the peace refused to receive Governor Betancourt's new juez de comisos for Morón.⁸⁰ In 1729 Governor Lope Carrillo had to intervene to force the cabildo to receive don Simón Sánchez Castro as

⁷⁷ "Esta ciudad no tiene más que el nombre." In Altolaguirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, p. 60.

⁷⁸ This was standard for all cities in the province, including Caracas, where governors, upon arriving in the province, were required to present themselves to the Caracas cabildo. See Ramón Aizpurúa's entry on "Municipios: Siglos XVI-XVIII," in Manuel Pérez Vila, ed., *Diccionario de historia de Venezuela*, Volume 2, pp. 1031-1036.

⁷⁹ The privilege was granted to the Caracas cabildo in 1676, revoked in 1694, reinstated in 1706, limited in 1728, and finally eliminated in 1736, when the Crown specified that the lieutenant governor—a position created in the 1728 real cédula—would assume the governor's civil duties and the castellano of La Guaira, the military ones. For a summary, see *Ibid.*, p. 1034.

⁸⁰ "Sobre suspensión del empleo de teniente de justicia mayor de Nirgua a Don Juan de la Rocha," AGN, Empleados de la Colonia, Volume 3, Expediente 3, folios 36-77.

justice of the peace.⁸¹ A third example dates from 1756, when the cabildo declined to receive the credentials of don Joaquín de Rivera, also appointed justice of the peace.⁸²

The opportunities for these machinations came with some frequency, since each new governor usually named a new set of subordinate officers. Once settled in the capital, new governors reviewed the corps of justices of the peace and either confirmed the ones in place or named new ones. Governors, when they were not satisfied with their *tenientes'* performance, could replace them and present new ones to the local *cabildos* at the beginning of each year. In each of the three cases above the appointment came not at the beginning of the governor's term but after some time had passed. In the 1719 case, to be discussed in greater detail below, Governor Betancourt moved to replace a *juez de comisos* who had proven himself unruly. The second case probably involves the governor's new appointee. Governor Carrillo de Andrade took his position in Caracas on June 29, 1728; Sánchez Castro's appeal to him dates from Valentine's Day, 1729, so it is most likely that Sánchez was named as part of Carrillo de Andrade's attempt to clear out the previous governor's *cronies* and place his own. Sánchez replaced don Manuel de Salinas, who had served as Nirgua's justice of the peace during Governor Portales' last years in Venezuela.⁸³ Finally, don Joaquín de Rivera was named in 1756, at the end of Governor Ricardos' time in Venezuela (1751-1757), so his case probably reflected the governor's dissatisfaction with local administration.

⁸¹ "Autos instruidos por don Simón Sánchez Castro para obtener la aprobación de su título de teniente de justicia mayor de Nirgua," AGN, Empleados de la Colonia, Volume 4, Expediente 2, folios 30-35.

⁸² "El cabildo de Nirgua se niega a recibir a don Joaquín de Rivera como teniente de justicia mayor," AGN, Empleados de la Colonia, Volume 4, Expediente 6, folios 89-133.

⁸³ Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*, pp. 243-244.

Gilberto Quintero, in his study of the *teniente de justicia mayor* in colonial Venezuela, argues that over the eighteenth century the Spanish imperial state expanded the presence and responsibilities of the justices of the peace to contain, counter, and reduce the power of local *cabildos*. They formed part of an effort to centralize political power and decision making, a push that began in the 1690s and gained strength in the 1720s. He makes the experience of the Caracas *cabildo*, which saw a steady decline in its authority over the eighteenth century, definitive for the province as a whole.⁸⁴

Quintero is correct to point out the conflict latent in the *teniente-cabildo* relationship. Nevertheless, he fails to recognize that governors' appointments did not always contribute to centralization. An institution created for one purpose could under certain circumstances serve very different purposes. There were times when the *tenientes*, sent out to control rowdy or smuggling-prone communities, integrated into or ingratiated themselves with the local power structure. There were other times when the governor recognized that his appointments had to balance anti-smuggling efforts with political stability in the interior regions. Often this meant appointing a member of the local landed elite. While the governor and his appointees frequently clashed with Nirgua's permanent residents, they also often made adjustments to establish mutually beneficial working relationships. Just as the governors who arrived in Caracas quickly learned, if they did not already know before taking office, that they had to make concessions to the local elite, the justices of the peace recognized they often had to choose between collaboration and isolation. In Nirgua, for example, the quarrels between the all-pardo *cabildo* and white *tenientes* represent moments of adjustment or the

⁸⁴ Quintero, *El teniente justicia mayor*.

assertion of local authority. They were the exceptions, although the governors tended to claim they were representative. More often than not cabildo officers and justices of the peace worked together, though with their occasional conflicts and power plays, of course.

The *tenientes* in Nirgua did not suppress smuggling as actively or frequently as their counterparts in places like the Tuy Valleys, Valencia, or San Felipe. Nor did the Nirgua *tenientes* perform as many confiscations as other officials working in the same jurisdiction. If the *comisos* deposits from the Real Hacienda account books serve as an indicator, the Nirgua *tenientes*' role was minimal. Between 1693 and 1756, only four deposits resulted from confiscations done by a Nirgua justice of the peace. Don Juan de la Rocha, who served as justice of the peace in the 1710s, performed three of these in the 1720s when he was *alcalde ordinario*.⁸⁵ Don Manuel de Salinas' 1728 confiscation of 16 fanegas of cacao in the "valles de costa abajo" is the only Real Hacienda attributed to this Nirgua *teniente*.⁸⁶ Often the officer's delegate, usually identified as a *cabo* or *guerra* or *juez de comisos*, made the initial arrest and confiscation and then turned over the goods, prisoners, and paperwork to the *teniente*. The Real Hacienda records show negligible activity by the Nirgua *cabos*. Of the 28 entries from Nirgua, there is only one that may have been done by a *teniente's* *cabo*: Cabo Custodio Morales grabbed 6 mules at the mouth of the Alparगतन River in 1748 or 1749.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Volume 43, folios 162v-163, 167v-168. Two deposits date from August 5, 1724, and one dates from October 27, 1724. De la Rocha was *teniente* during Marcos de Betancourt's term as governor (1716-1720).

⁸⁶ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Volume 47, folio 192v. After the cacao was auctioned for 192 pesos (12 pesos per fanega) and court and procedural costs were taken out, 105 pesos 5 reales were deposited in Caracas on June 14, 1728.

⁸⁷ The deposit was made in Caracas on April 18, 1749. The mules were auctioned in Puerto Cabello at 22.5 pesos per mule. It is hard to surmise from the Real Hacienda records when the actual arrests occurred,

The tenientes, like the Nirgua political elite, did not reside in the city of Nirgua. They, too, positioned themselves in the jurisdiction's cacao-producing areas or along major trade and communication routes. Juan de la Rocha, for example, split his time between Urama and Morón.⁸⁸ Don Manuel Santiago de Ochoa exercised office from the village of Onoto⁸⁹ and maintained a residence in Montalbán.⁹⁰ Rivera worked from his house in the Valley of Alpargatón.⁹¹ De la Rocha and Rivera chose proximity to the cacao plantations. For Ochoa, whose unusually long term as *teniente* extended from the 1730s into the 1740s, Onoto and Montalbán commanded a strategic position from which to operate. The settlements stood at a crossroads. Here the east-west route that joined Caracas and Valencia with Barquisimeto intersected with the north-south route along the Canoabo and Aguirre Rivers that joined Nirgua's cacao producing centers with its mountain valleys and the llanos further to the south. From his mountain base, Ochoa was a short trip from the coast, most importantly the Punta de Morón, yet protected from the

especially since some cases could drag on for years before the Real Hacienda received anything. AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Volume 60, folio 97.

⁸⁸ See the above Real Hacienda entries that list De la Rocha as the arresting officer; also see AGN, Empleados de la Colonia, Volume 3, Expediente 3, to be discussed below.

⁸⁹ "Autos de comiso hecho por don Francico Antonio Gómez, cabo de don Manuel de Ochoa *teniente* de Nirgua, de diferentes cargas de cacao y bestias," AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 2-463-1, folios 1-36v; "Autos criminales seguidos contra Gregorio Marrero y otros sobre comercio clandestino," AGN, Comisos, Volume 14, Expediente 2, folios 110-148v; "Autos formados y remitidos por el *teniente* de la ciudad de Nirgua, don Manuel Santiago de Ochoa, sobre la aprehensión de diez cargas de cacao y sus mulas," AGN, Comisos, Volume 22, Expediente 1, folios 1-186.

⁹⁰ Lieutenant Governor López de Urrello, when he passed through Nirgua in 1741, rounding up troops to confront the San Felipe cabildo, stopped in Montalbán and spent three nights at Ochoa's house there. See León Trujillo, *Motín y sublevación en San Felipe* (Caracas: Jaime Villegas, 1955), pp. 55-57.

⁹¹ "Diligencias practicadas por el *Teniente Justica Mayor* de la ciudad de Nirgua, sobre la aprehensión de seis cargas de cacao y otras tantas bestias mulares con sus aperos," AGN, Comisos, Volume 26, Expedientes 3, folios 39-50v; "Expediente formado por don Joaquín de Rivera, *teniente* de justicia mayor de la jurisdicción de Nirgua, sobre el registro de una casa que ocuparon los Curas párrocos, en que se sospecha han introducido géneros ilícitos," AGN, Comisos, Volume 26, Expediente 4, folios 51-59.

Dutch traders, Spanish corsairs, RCG patrols, and jueces de comisos that lurked on Nirgua's coastal strip.

The Real Hacienda records do not reflect the level of activity of either the justices of the peace or the *alcaldes* of Nirgua because their actions tended not to produce regular deposits in the royal coffers. One explanation is that the local treasury officials, instead of forwarding the money to Caracas as they were supposed to in *comisos* cases, often held it in the Nirgua *caja* and used it as a slush fund.⁹² They then performed periodic transfers of lump sums that represented various *comisos*. The Real Hacienda records in Caracas reflect this. For example, in November of 1722, Bernardo de Salamanca, the Real Hacienda administrator in Nirgua, had Licentiate don Francisco Pérez de Estupiñán, vicar of Nirgua, and don Ignacio de Istúriz transport 400 pesos and 247 pesos 2.5 reales, respectively, to Caracas. The money came from four *comisos* performed in the Nirgua area.⁹³ A second example dates from February 1742, when the Real Hacienda received 150 pesos, the result of an unspecified number of *comisos*, from don Eugenio de Salazar, former treasury administrator in Nirgua.⁹⁴

Local officials' hoarding and unapproved use of confiscated items and *comisos* monies reduced the frequency of registered *comisos* deposits from Nirgua, but it was the way in which they exercised their offices, more than the ways they used the prizes and

⁹² This was a common practice in colonial Spanish America. See Murdo J. MacLeod, "From the Mediterranean to the Indigenous People of Colonial Guatemala: The Evolution of the *Cofradía*," in Ueli Hostettler and Matthew Restall, eds., *Maya Survivalism* (Markt Schwaben: Verlag Anton Sauerwein, 2001), pp. 101-111.

⁹³ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volume 42, November 28, 1722, folio 186.

⁹⁴ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volume 53, February 19, 1742, folio 77v.

the money, that explains the relative absence of deposits from Nirgua. The region had various authorities with overlapping jurisdictions. It was also squeezed between two major cacao-producing areas —San Felipe and Valencia. Additionally, the busy Morón Point drew traders from all over the province.

From the end of the War of Spanish Succession through the War of Jenkins' Ear, the governors in Caracas and their immediate subordinates in the interior repeatedly and consistently tried to portray the residents of Nirgua as a tightly and hierarchically organized smuggling syndicate. Their frustrations with *nirguēños* led them to paint a simplified picture of colonial officials battling law-breaking locals. In truth, *nirguēños* also had trouble keeping tabs on the smuggling that went on in their jurisdiction. Cabildo officers, elected annually in January, worked to dismantle the transport, storage, and exchange operations developed by their predecessors. Occupants of the mountain valleys had little control over the activities of occupants of the coastal valleys. Nirgua's openness made it an attractive place to trade with the Dutch; it also produced incessant rivalries and clashes as different individuals and groups struggled to gain advantaged positions in this trade.

In their efforts to maximize their control over clandestine commerce, the *alcaldes* and justices of the peace spent more time exposing, countering, and eliminating rivals than they did arresting the smugglers who operated under their rivals' protection. Competition was internal and external. At times the justices of the peace and *alcaldes* worked to dismantle the networks other Nirgua *vecinos* had built when they controlled the cabildo. At other times they indirectly targeted the *vecinos* of other jurisdictions, especially Barquisimeto and San Felipe, by harassing the traders and muleteers who

entered Nirgua from these places.⁹⁵ The most important rivalry was over control of the Punta de Morón.

Alcaldes and justices of the peace targeted individuals and small groups of traders who entered Nirgua, often heading from San Felipe to Puerto Cabello for legally sanctioned trade, or with plans to stop at Morón for clandestine trade unprotected by local office holders. The local authorities looked for the slightest miscalculation, oversight, or misstep to bring upon them the full weight of their local version of the law. This typically happened with mule trains sent from San Felipe to Puerto Cabello along the coastal royal road. The muleteers and their assistants usually responded to their employers, patrons, and owners in San Felipe. Once they crossed the Yaracuy River, they lost this backing and were at the mercy of the Nirgua authorities. In June of 1757, for example, the justice of the peace of Nirgua detained two men with six mules and six loads of cacao, heading for Puerto Cabello from Vicente Páez's cacao plantation on the west bank of the river.⁹⁶ Páez's wife, doña Nicolasa del Castillo, sent out Joseph Fernando de Ascención, a free pardo from Nirgua, along with Joseph Fructuoso, a slave on the plantation, with a *guía* issued by San Felipe Teniente don Agustín Piñango for the transport of 6 loads of cacao to Puerto Cabello. The two men arrived at the valley of Alpagatón around nine in the morning on June 18. Teniente Rivera stopped them and inspected their papers. He found they had no proof of having paid the *peso de carga*, the

⁹⁵ These confrontations usually did produce comisos deposits, as the nirgüeno officials, knowing that their often dubious arrests and confiscations would evoke responses from the traders' backers in San Felipe or Barquisimeto, closely followed comisos procedures as outlined by law and quickly involved the governor. By calling in a powerful backer, they minimized the threat of reprisal from their rivals.

⁹⁶ "Diligencias practicadas por el teniente justicia mayor de la ciudad de Nirgua, sobre la aprehensión de seis cargas de cacao y otras tantas bestias mulares con sus aperos," July 23, 1757, AGN, Comisos, Volume 26, Expediente 3, folios 39-50v.

various royal taxes on exports, and they lacked the required permission from the alcalde of San Felipe. Rivera took the guía, the mules, their harness and tack, and the cacao, detained the men, and opened an investigation. He eventually forwarded the goods to Governor Ricardos in Caracas, who determined that they were to be auctioned as legitimately confiscated contraband and that Páez be investigated for attempting to smuggle.

Cabildo members' efforts to impose their will within Nirgua proved complicated and inconsistent. Just as the governors in Caracas could hope to achieve only partial or sporadic control over smuggling in the area, the alcaldes and justices of the peace strived for yet never achieved widespread adherence to their coalitions. They, like other authorities in the area, had their points of strength and weakness. In general terms, the Nirgua cabildo members and the justice of the peace, when they collaborated, controlled Nirgua's mountain valleys, the coastal valleys of Urama and Alpargatón, and the route that joined them—the trail between Canoabo and Montalbán. This was their base from which they taxed legal and extra-legal trade in the area, harassed the military patrols assigned to Morón, and worked to expand their influence and privilege, especially towards the jurisdiction's extremes.

Local officials who confronted consolidated smuggling operations faced a great challenge, since they took on much more than just a string of safe houses or trusted individuals. Extended family, combined with patronage, served as the foundation of successful smuggling networks. The more powerful and enduring groups combined loyalties based on real and fictive kinship and patron-client relations with control over political office and privileged access to productive and transportive resources. Don

Manuel Santiago de Ochoa, justice of the peace during Lardizábal's period as captain general, sought to dismantle a family operation he deemed particularly dangerous. The De la Parras, headed by Gregorio de la Parra, came under official scrutiny in the years just after Andresote's rejection of RCG authority.⁹⁷ Family members had served on the Nirgua cabildo for generations. Gregorio's father had secured the offices of regidor and *depositario general* of the city in 1718.⁹⁸ Ochoa, in his case against the De la Parras, repeatedly complained that the family still enjoyed the sympathies of the current cabildo.

The De la Parra family and its associates spread themselves across the jurisdiction and into the llanos. Gregorio de la Parra lived at the foot of the Cerro Palomera, on Nirgua's southern border, with his daughter and his son-in-law. Another daughter lived next door. His brother, Antonio, had a place in the Valley of Canoabo, and a close friend and associate, Pedro Vellorín, maintained a house on a hill that overlooked Sabanas Altas.⁹⁹

María Cristina de la Parra, Gregorio's daughter, claimed Ochoa was motivated by personal animosity. According to her, Ochoa's sister wanted to marry Juan Francisco Román, María Cristina's husband, but he had rebuffed her. Since then, Ochoa had sought to avenge his affronted sister against Román and by extension, his in-laws.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ "Autos criminales seguidos contra Gregorio Marrero," folios 110-148v.

⁹⁸ "Autos instruidos para el remate del Oficio de Regidor y Depositario General de la ciudad de Nirgua, hecho en el Capitán Cristóbal Marcos de la Parra," Caracas, August 13, 1718, AGN, Ayuntamientos, Volume 3, Expediente 3, folios 29-49.

⁹⁹ "Autos contra José Becerril y otros por haber estos saltado en tierra en la Punta de Morón con ropa de los extranjeros," San Felipe and Nirgua, December 16, 1745, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 2-490-1, folios 1-146.

¹⁰⁰ "Autos criminales seguidos contra Gregorio Marrero," folio 138. Compare with the conflict between Justice of the Peace Joseph Luis Felipes and the Rodríguez Lamas family in Valencia, discussed in Chapter 4.

Outsiders who failed to secure nirgüño protection were easy targets. Fellow nirgüños who could make the same claims to local autonomy, enjoyed access to cabildo positions or members, and mobilized human and physical resources across the jurisdiction's interior proved more difficult. Nirgua's borders also proved difficult to control, as activities along them blurred the distinctions of inside and outside and of jurisdictional authority.

The Periphery's Periphery: Borders and Border Settlements

The smuggling networks that operated in Nirgua depended on key resources at the jurisdiction's edges. Four stood out: the Punta de Morón to the north, the Yaracuy River to the west, the llanos to the south, and the mountain settlement of Montalbán to the east. These were the major points of exchange and storage for goods entering and exiting the district. The llanos and riverside locales provided safe cover for smugglers coming from other parts who enjoyed partnership with Nirgua residents and the protection of Nirgua officials. They also provided a safe staging area for nirgüños to make excursions into other areas, or places from which to flee local authorities. The llanos were especially attractive for those who wanted to get away temporarily or permanently.

The Yaracuy River marked the limit between San Felipe and Nirgua. It was clear which city presided over which bank, but authority over the river itself was not. Governors repeatedly attempted to eliminate confusion by banning all traffic on the river. As will be shown in the next chapter on San Felipe, this prohibitive policy was unenforceable. Many of the men persecuted during Andresote's rebellion lived on both sides of the river and worked as *piragüistas*, transporting cacao to the coast for

sanfelipeños and nirgüños.¹⁰¹ In addition to outright violation of the ban, traders also used the river to escape authorities, avoid taxes, and store goods. The Nirgua side of the river was dotted with small thatch structures that had a big part in trade with the Dutch. Traders had their shipments of cacao and tobacco moved down the river and then stored at these places. This way, sanfelipeños removed their goods from their jurisdiction and avoided paying not only the myriad royal taxes on exports, but also the fees local *alcaldes* or *tenientes* charged for permission to transport goods across the jurisdiction. Plantation owners, merchants, and river operators did not limit their use of riverside storage facilities to clandestine activities. They had legitimate reasons to use these places. Juan Félix Márquez, for example, was a San Felipe vecino who in 1750 had been using the river and the sheds for three years to move and hold his cacao.¹⁰² He claimed that many did as he did—they stored cacao on both sides of the river, without a *guía*, until they accumulated the number of loads they wanted to export. While perfectly legal, the practice lent itself to clandestine activities, since often portions of the stored cacao slipped down the Yaracuy to the Golfo Triste, or across into Nirgua and on to Morón.

In the mid-eighteenth century a free *pardo* named Joseph Francisco Secuencia, resident of Nirgua, operated the biggest and most active storage facility along the river. Traders and officials alike recognized Secuencia's place in the Agua Negra Valley, on the river's eastern bank, as the most secure locale to store cacao.¹⁰³ Agua Negra, in turn, was recognized as the main site from which cacao shipments were sent out, either to the

¹⁰¹ Felice Cardot, *La rebelión de Andresote*, pp. 46-47, 51.

¹⁰² "Autos que sigue don Martín Pérez de Castro sobre haberle maltratado de obras y palabras don Gabriel Bautista del Campo, vecino de la ciudad de San Felipe," AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 2-588-1, folio 63.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, folios 8v, 42. Officially under San Felipe's authority, Agua Negra extended across the river into both Nirgua and San Felipe jurisdictions.

Dutch along the coast or to the RCG in Puerto Cabello.¹⁰⁴ In 1750, Gabriel Bautista del Campo confiscated the cacao don Martín Pérez de Castro had stored at Secuencia's place. Pérez de Castro informed the governor that he, like many others, sent his cacao to the Yaracuy River, then to Secuencia's house, where it was stored for later transport to Puerto Cabello.¹⁰⁵ Del Campo, the head of the San Felipe-based coastal patrols, countered that most of the back and forth movement across the river was to avoid paying royal taxes, particularly the fees that went towards maintaining the soldiers under his direction.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, when Campo confiscated Pérez de Castro's cacao, he left it in place, with Secuencia as the depositor.¹⁰⁷ Secuencia operated a successful storage facility, for both legal and clandestine trade, because he enjoyed contacts and friendships with authorities on both sides of the river, and he managed to make himself, his wife, and their place needed.¹⁰⁸

Slightly removed from the river, the Nirgua locales of Tucuragua, Taría, and Cabria formed part of its flood plain. Their inhabitants tended to align themselves more with authorities in San Felipe or those positioned at Morón than with nirguëño officers, as the

¹⁰⁴ Dionisio Martínez, a resident of San Felipe who traded frequently with the RCG factoría in Puerto Cabello, on October 9, 1750, informed the governor that Agua Negra was "el sitio, o puerto, donde generalmente se embarcan los cacao." Ibid., folio 44v.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., folio 6v.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., folios 15, 42-43.

¹⁰⁷ Actually, he left it with Secuencia's wife, María Serena. Secuencia traveled often, and when he did, his wife received deliveries. Ibid., folios 15v, 17v-18. Normally comisos officers left confiscated goods with a third party they trusted.

¹⁰⁸ For further examples of dwellings and storages facilities along the Nirgua side of the Yaracuy River, see "Autos criminales seguidos contra Gregorio Marrero y otros sobre comercio clandestino," which includes testimony on Salvador Herrera's purchasing textiles at various spots along the river; see also "Sobre comercio ilícito contra el Reverendo Padre Fray Antonio Rivas," AHAC, Judiciales, Signatura 28-4, folios 1-74.

cacao-hacienda owners and overseers, as well as the local muleteers and small-property owners, usually fell outside of the patronage system that operated along the Urama-Canoabo-Montalbán-Nirgua axes. Some were targeted by Nirgua's *alcaldes*.¹⁰⁹ This animosity pushed many to seek protection and collaboration elsewhere. They often served as witnesses in *comisos* cases investigated by the *juez de comisos* at Morón or don Gabriel Bautista del Campo, from San Felipe. The *alcaldes* and justices of the peace had difficulty keeping them in line. The justices of the peace, while they tried to recruit the inhabitants of these settlements, could not count on them to behave properly, as evinced by the example of Justice of the Peace Ochoa's appointment of a *cabo* for the area.

In the 1740s Francisco Gómez de Figueroa was commissioned by Ochoa to patrol the valleys of Cabria, Taria, and their surrounding areas, and to issue *guías* for produce sent out to Puerto Cabello.¹¹⁰ Gómez lived in Cabria, where he had a small plot of cacao trees.¹¹¹ He also had a number of friends in Cabria, whom he did not forget once in office. In 1747 he overstepped the bounds of what was expected of him, confiscating the wrong man's cacao in the wrong way. Don Florencio de la Plaza y Blanco had sent his *peón*, Juan Dionisio de Castillo, to Cabria with 40 arrobas of jerky, which Castillo

¹⁰⁹ For example, in 1741 don Francisco Gómez de Figueroa filed a complaint with the governor about alleged abuse by *Alcalde* José Antonio de la Mota. He claimed De la Mota had confiscated his house and cacao estate in Cabria and rented estate and rented it to a third party. "Autos por agravio remitidos a este Tribunal por parte de don Francisco Gómez de Figueroa y en su nombre Pedro Juan de Segovia, contra José Antonio de la Mota, siendo *alcalde ordinario* de la ciudad de Nirgua," AGN, *Diversos*, Volume 23, Expediente 3, folios 69-168. Before De la Mota, don Eugenio de Salazar y Gómez, *alcalde ordinario* in Nirgua, had also tried to make things difficult for Gómez de Figueroa by refusing to hear an appeal brought by the Cabria resident, also about his house. Governor Zuloaga fined the *alcalde* 30 pesos for his refusal. AGN, *Real Hacienda*, *Penas de Cámara*, Volume 56, December 14, 1744, folios 116-116v.

¹¹⁰ "Autos de *comisos* hechos por don Francisco Antonio Gómez, *cabo* de don Manuel de Ochoa, *teniente* de Nirgua, de diferentes cargas de cacao y bestias," 1747, AANH, RP, *Civiles*, Signature 2-463-1, folios 1-36.

¹¹¹ From "Autos por agravio," AGN, *Diversos*, Volume 23, Expediente 3, folios 69-168.

delivered to Joseph Miquirena.¹¹² Miquirena had requested the meat from De la Plaza y Blanco and had offered cacao in exchange. On May 6, 1747, Castillo was on his way back to his patron's cacao plantation in Urama, with 4 mules loaded with 80 *almudes* of cacao when Gómez de Figueroa, accompanied by three soldiers from Cabria, stopped him, found he had no guía, and confiscated the cacao and mules.¹¹³ He left the comiso deposited with Francisco Joseph de Hinojosa.

Gómez de Figueroa then moved quickly. The next day was Sunday, and after mass let out in the afternoon, he announced on Cabria's church square the auction of 4 mules with harness and tack and 4 bags of cacao. Hinojosa bought two of the 4 mules: a "rubia" for 15 pesos and a "parda" for 12.¹¹⁴ The other two, another *parda* and a "negra," were purchased by Cecilio Miota for 14 and 12 pesos, respectively. Miota served as a purchasing agent. One of the mules ended up with Joseph Miquirena and the other with don Diego de Fuentes, the priest who served the Taría area.¹¹⁵ The cacao went to the man charged with its custody, Hinojosa, who paid 31 pesos for about 6 and two-thirds fanegas.¹¹⁶

Plaza was the wrong man to challenge because he was a wealthy plantation owner with resources and connections that extended across Nirgua and into the llanos and the provincial capital. He most likely enjoyed amicable relations with the Nirgua teniente.

¹¹² There were about 25 pounds in every arroba of jerky, though it varied depending on the item measured. See Hussey, *The Caracas Company*, p. 303.

¹¹³ An *almud* equaled about one-half fanega.

¹¹⁴ "Autos de comisos hechos por don Francisco Antonio Gómez," folios 2-2v.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, folios 2, 23v.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, folio 2v.

He regularly drove cattle from the herds he kept in the llanos, sending them across Nirgua to the coast, where he had them slaughtered, the beef salted and sold among the coastal cacao haciendas.¹¹⁷ His wife, doña Ana María de Liendo, *vecina* of Caracas, successfully represented him before the governor. In the end the governor ordered Gómez de Figueroa to return the cacao and the mules to Plaza. Going it alone, as the Gómez case demonstrates, was risky for members of these communities. They were more secure when they aligned themselves with more powerful patrons, usually the juez de comisos in charge of Morón.¹¹⁸

The llanos also served those seeking to avoid persecution, law enforcement, vendetta, or abuse.¹¹⁹ Agustín Hurtado, who had ties to the De la Parra family network, fled to the llanos in 1734 when the Nirgua justice of the peace sought his arrest for his illicit relation with an Indian woman named Elena.¹²⁰ Hurtado did not wander aimlessly once across the border: he kept mules in Araguata and raised cattle in the llanos.¹²¹

Some fled to the llanos not to hide themselves but to protect other people or goods. In August of 1727, don Vicente Núñez, justice of the peace in Nirgua, was down at

¹¹⁷ I assume he processed and sold the hides as well.

¹¹⁸ This will be discussed in greater detail below.

¹¹⁹ Manuel Lucena Salmoral, "El sistema de cuadrillas de ronda para la seguridad de los llanos a fines del período colonial: Los antecedentes de las Ordenanzas de Llanos de 1811," in *Memoria del Tercer Congreso Venezolano de Historia* (Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1979), Tomo II, pp. 189-225.

¹²⁰ "Autos criminales seguidos contra Gregorio Marrero," folio 131.

¹²¹ For similar cases in which smugglers used the llanos to hide out, see "Autos del decomiso de contrabando introducido por Francisco Marín, efectuado por Diego de Matos, comisionado del gobernador," Nirgua, September 10, 1717, AANH, RP, Civiles, folios 1-438. From Valencia, see "Se acusa a Victorio Carrizales, Ignacio Matute, Pedro Prado y otras personas, entre ellos indios, de tener un cargamento de tabaco ilícito de los holandeses," Valencia, April 30, 1734, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-197-5, folios 1-26; from Caracas, see "Causa criminal seguida contra José Gregorio de Fuenmayor por habersele aprehendido un poco de aguardiente de caña," Caracas, April 1, 1718, AGN, Comisos, Volume 3, Expediente 2, folios 189-218.

Morón when a Dutch sloop, fleeing from a Spanish corsair, ran aground.¹²² Everyone on board came ashore, including four young black slaves ("cuatro negritos muleques"). Núñez detained the four, sent two of them up the Morón River with his assistant (ayudante), and kept the other two with him. The captain of the sloop, a man named Juan Martín, was the owner of the four young men. He too worked his way up the Morón River, fleeing the corsairs. He ran into Núñez's assistant, took back the two slaves, and headed west for Tucacas.¹²³ In the meantime, Núñez marched off to Alpargatón, distancing himself and the two muleques from the Dutch and Spanish crews who remained at Morón. Núñez took them to the local priest's house, where he had Licentiate don Tomás Fernández de Castillo y Olivo baptize them. He then continued south over the mountains. Núñez took the two young men to the town of Parapara in the llanos, where he left them until it was safe to return to Nirgua. Later he sent them back to Morón, where they were put to work on don Martín de Ascanio's plantation. It is not clear if Núñez sold the two or if he loaned them to Ascanio. In either case, he made good on the grounding of the Dutch sloop.¹²⁴

The Nirgua side of the border with the llanos had, like the east bank of the Yaracuy River, structures and dwellings that functioned as storage and staging areas for incursions both north and south. These places were halfway points for importers bringing up goods

¹²² "Diego Portales en la causa criminal de oficio que sigue contra Vicente Núñez, teniente de justicia mayor de Nirgua, sobre el trato y comercio ilícito con extranjeros," August 9, 1727, AHAC, Judiciales, Signatura 25-6, folios 1-10v. This information is from folio 4.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, folios 4-5.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, folios 1v, 8-9v. This is the investigation done by Church authorities. The priest, Castillo, was cleared of any wrongdoing by both the investigator, Licentiate don Manuel de Grezala y Aguirre, a priest in Guaguaza, and Bishop Escalona, who confirmed Grezala's finding. There were accusations that Castillo kept the two muleques himself. Castillo had a cacao plantation in the Morón area, but all witnesses stated that the slaves on the property were long-time residents and none was a muleque.

from the mouth of the Yaracuy River or Morón to distribute them in the interior. They also served those going the other way, carrying tobacco from Barinas to the coast.

The case brought by don Manuel Santiago de Ochoa against the De la Parra family demonstrates this. Gregorio de la Parra's house in Araguata, located just below the Cerro Palomera, was not only the residence for De la Parra, his daughter María Cristina, and her husband Juan Francisco Román, but also the physical center of the family-based smuggling ring. Members of the family, their friends, and associates met there to exchange goods and information, to hide from unsympathetic authorities, and to organize their activities. In 1734 Salvador Herrera, a *bodeguero* originally from the Canary Islands, made his way up the Yaracuy River valley to De la Parra's home, fleeing from Justice of the Peace Ochoa after Herrera purchased contraband textiles along the river. At De la Parra's place he sold textiles to two men who had been expecting him. A man named Agustín purchased a load and headed off to the llanos to resell it. Pablo Vellorín bought from Herrera as well. He then left with De la Parra's son-in-law to sell in Nirgua, Canoabo, and Montalbán.¹²⁵

Two more border areas merit attention, both along the eastern limit with Valencia. First, the mountain settlement of Montalbán, the preferred site of residence for local Crown officials, straddled the intersection of the east-west route between Valencia, Nirgua, and Barquisimeto and the north-south route that joined the mountain valleys with the coast. The hamlet of Canoabo, along the route to the sea, also played an important role. For example, Gregorio de la Parra's brother, Antonio, had a hideout ("una rochela") in the Valley of Canoabo. Fernando Vellorín, another smuggler, had a house in Sabanas

¹²⁵ "Autos criminales seguidos contra Gregorio Marrero," folios 105-106, 131.

Altas, close to both Valencia and the llanos. Located at the top of a hill, the house had no cultivated lands around it.¹²⁶ The heavy traffic that went on between Montalbán and Urama did not go unnoticed in Caracas. On August 7, 1734, Lardizábal, in addition to reiterating an older ban on traffic along the Yaracuy river, prohibited travel along the Urama mountain trail—the route that joined Urama, Canoabo, and Montalbán. The captain general threatened to punish violators with loss of property and death.¹²⁷

The fourth and final border area was the most important. Point Morón was the most contested junction in all of Nirgua. Officials and traders who held an advantageous position at Morón enjoyed privilege throughout Nirgua and into Valencia, San Felipe, and beyond. The struggles over the point and its hinterland reveal the lines that were drawn and the networks that developed to control and exploit the clandestine trade with the Dutch.

Morón, Nirgua's Pivot

The Real Hacienda records reveal that most of the arrests in Nirgua reported to the provincial government took place along the coast, and in particular, at the Punta de Morón. Of the 28 entries, 23 included information on location; 14 of these indicated the arrest occurred on the coast. Twelve of the 14 took place in Urama, Alpargatón, or Morón. And of the 14 coastal arrests, 8 listed Morón, the Valley of Morón, or the Punta de Morón.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Ibid., folios 127, 129v.

¹²⁷ "Autos que sigue don Martín Pérez de Castro," folios 83-89.

¹²⁸ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volumes 44-60.

Most of the smuggling done in Nirgua originated or ended at Morón. Dutch traders flocked there, especially during the month of September, sailing directly from either Curaçao or Tucacas or pulling in for one last deal after cruising the Caracas coast and before returning to Curaçao or Tucacas. Venezuelan traders from Valencia, San Felipe, Barquisimeto, and the llanos brought cacao, tobacco, and hides down to the point and traded them for textiles, food, metal tools, and specie. Colonial officials lingered at the point as well, attacking the trade, taxing it, or doing a bit of both. Morón was Nirgua's first and final point of exchange between Venezuela and Curaçao, and control over the point meant greater influence along the lines of trade and communication both towards the interior and out to sea.¹²⁹

Similar to the Montalbán area and the banks of the Yaracuy, Morón had its share of safe house, informal storage facilities, and lookout positions. Francisco Marín, Nirgua's *alcalde de la Santa Hermandad* in the 1710s, worked out of Francisco Piña's house in Morón.¹³⁰ Here he billeted his men, met with traders from Barquisimeto and the llanos who hoped to trade at Morón, and settled accounts. The pilot Pedro Cadenas, detained and deported in 1750, used as his operative base the house in Morón he shared with his cohabitant.¹³¹

¹²⁹ For a brief and uneven history of Santa Ana de Morón, see Miguel Elías Dao, *Morón de Venezuela: Panorama histórico y geográfico del Municipio Juan José Mora* (Caracas: Italgráfica, 1984).

¹³⁰ Officially, the cabildo-appointed *alcaldes de la Santa Hermandad* were charged with enforcing the law and maintaining social order outside the city. They responded to the *alcaldes ordinarios'* instructions. See Aizpurua, "Municipios," p. 1033.

¹³¹ "Autos criminales fechas por el Real Oficio de Justicia contra Pedro López Cadenas, vecino de la ciudad de Cartagena de las Indias, sobre ser práctico de los holandeses en los tratos de comercio ilícito, y por una herida que dió con una lanza a Santiago de Acosta, vecino del Valle de Morón," AGN, Comisos, Volume 24, Expediente 1, folios 1-12v. Information about his residence can be found on folios 7, 8, 9v, and 10.

Unlike the other residential and storage buildings along the other borders, the sites at Morón were ephemeral. Piña's home functioned as the alcalde's field office and barracks only as long as Marín held the office. Cadenas' home ceased to serve its commercial purpose when the young man was sent off to La Guaira for eventual deportation to Cartagena de las Indias. Morón, unlike the other major points where goods entered and exited Nirgua, was surprisingly empty. As discussed above, its population was relatively small, with the majority of its occupants concentrated on the big cacao plantations just inland. Unlike the Yaracuy or Nirgua's southern border, Morón did not have long-term storage facilities. Goods moved through the area quickly. The layers of authority that smothered Morón did not have their corresponding topography of physical infrastructure to support the continued presence and activity. They left Morón open.

After Tucacas, Morón was the preferred site for Venezuelan traders, *prácticos*, and others for travel to and from Curaçao.¹³² Dutch sloops regularly pulled in at Morón as they traveled west from the cacao-producing valleys of Caracas and Valencia on their way to Tucacas or Curaçao.

Pilots, or *prácticos*, initiated and ended their collaborations with Dutch captains at the Punta de Morón. The frequency and boldness with which *prácticos* boarded and disembarked from Dutch ships at Morón attest to the point's central position in the contraband trade. In December 1730, Captain Pedro Nicolás López, then alcalde ordinario of Nirgua, was patrolling the Salado River.¹³³ He opened an investigation upon

¹³² The Dutch had from the beginning of the eighteenth century a trading post at Tucacas, which included a synagogue. It lasted until 1732, when the RCG began work on a fort and warehouse there. Aizpurua, *Curacao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 152-153.

¹³³ The Salado River joins the Urama River just east of the settlement of Urama.

receiving word that a Dutch sloop had just put in at Morón. Local residents who provided testimony claimed that as many as six prácticos, identified as Dutch and creoles from Venezuela, disembarked, and at least two who had been waiting at Morón got on board.¹³⁴ On September 14, 1733, Captain Juan Blanco, an Irishman sailing out of Curaçao, anchored his sloop the Hummingbird at the Punta de Morón and came ashore. Two Nirgua residents and his práctico, a Greek man named Juan Bautista, accompanied him.¹³⁵ A third example involves a práctico who lived in the area. In September of 1750, Pedro López, more commonly known as Pedro Cadenas, came ashore at Morón with a group of traders from Curaçao. Various residents of Morón claimed he earned his living as a práctico, traveling up and down the valley of Morón "with no specific employment." Others added that besides serving as a go-between for Dutch traders and Venezuelan producers, he also made canoes, which he sold to the Dutch. Cadenas, a mulatto originally from Cartagena in New Granada, made his home in Morón, where he lived with Dionisia Gutiérrez.¹³⁶

The Nirgua *alcaldes* fought relentlessly to keep coastal patrols and *jueces de comisos* away from Morón. Their strategies involved direct confrontation as well as legal maneuvers to impede the governors' appointees from assuming their positions.

The *alcaldes* did not engage directly high-ranking military officers or colonial officials assigned to suppress contraband. Instead, clashes took place at lower levels,

¹³⁴ "Autos originales fechos por Pedro Nicolás López, sobre justificación, tratos y comercios ilícitos que ejecutaron por vasallos de mala ley en el Valle de Morón," AANHV, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-93-3, December 4, 1730, folios 1-4.

¹³⁵ "Causa criminal sobre comercios ilícitos en las costas de esta provincia, remitida al tribunal del señor Comandante General por don Domingo Aróstegui," folio 158v.

¹³⁶ "Autos criminales fechas por el Real Oficio de Justicia contra Pedro López Cadenas," folios 3-4, 10v.

between the cabildo's low-ranking officers and the *juez de comisos* with specific assignments. The 1717 clash between Francisco Marín, alcalde de la Santa Hermandad of Nirgua, and don Domingo Aróstegui, demonstrates this dynamic.

On Tuesday, September 14, 1717, Marín, accompanied by over 20 men, stopped Aróstegui from crossing the Sanchón River and entering Nirgua jurisdiction.¹³⁷ Don Diego de Matos, the governor's juez general de comisos in the Province of Venezuela, had sent Aróstegui there because he had received word that the juez de comisos assigned to Morón and Agua Caliente was not doing enough to make his presence felt at Morón. Marín, unimpressed by Aróstegui's credentials, refused to recognize his authority, claiming he had failed to present himself before the Nirgua cabildo. He also suggested Aróstegui patrol on the east side of the Sanchón river and leave the west side to him.¹³⁸ Aróstegui, outgunned and outgunned, backed down, returning to the Puerto Cabello area, where he reported the incident to Matos.¹³⁹

Aróstegui's assignment came at a bad time for Marín. He had just made arrangements with two men from Barquisimeto, don Carlos de Molina and Juan de Bustos, who wanted to sell their tobacco and cacao at Morón.¹⁴⁰ They paid him 2 pesos

¹³⁷ "Autos del descomiso de contrabando introducido por Francisco Marín, efectuado por Diego de Matos, comisionado del gobernador," AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-10-4, folios 2-3v.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, folio 18.

¹³⁹ Borrowed from Benedict Anderson, "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams," *New Left Review* 169 (May-June 1988), p. 18: "With splendid, grumbling insouciance, Senator Sergio 'Serging' Osmeña, Jr., on losing the 1969 presidential race to Ferdinand Marcos, complained: 'We were outgunned, outgunned, and outgold.'"

¹⁴⁰ There may have been a third trader named don Luis de Cosío. "Autos del descomiso de contrabando introducido por Francisco Marín," folio 25v.

for each load sold to the Dutch, the standard rate for official negligence. Marín, in turn, made sure no one impeded the transaction.

Marín faced other challenges besides Aróstegui's to his temporary control over Morón. He had neutralized don Mateo de Osorio, the juez de comisos for Morón and Agua Caliente whom Aróstegui was sent to replace. He did this by spreading the word that he would garrote Osorio if he found him near Morón. Osorio had also heard that Marín had set up people from Alpargatón to Urama to keep him informed of traders' and officers' movements through the area. Osorio, who like Aróstegui lacked the resources to challenge Marín, limited his activity to Agua Caliente, conceding the point to Nirgua's municipal authorities.

Osorio, Aróstegui, and their boss, Matos, were infuriated by Marín's strong-arm tactics. His maneuvers were for them indicative of a general conspiracy by the Nirgua cabildo officers and their followers, a compact in which all nirguñeos consistently worked to undermine their authority. Marín, as alcalde de la Santa Hermandad, did not dedicate all of his time to regulating exchange at the Punta de Morón. In September he established himself in Morón and pulled together a posse on the spot. Almost all of its members were irregulars whose work with Marín ended when the alcalde's presence on the coast did. Some signed on voluntarily; others were forced to join. Only one man, Francisco Durán, worked with Marín on a permanent basis. Marín paid him an annual salary of 45 pesos.¹⁴¹ Most of the other members of his gang worked by the job. Marín rounded them up in the weeks before the deal at Morón was to take place. Afterwards, he paid them, usually in textiles, and then they all went their separate ways.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., folios 19-22.

Matos, in response to Marín's affront, rounded up about 40 men and headed out to Morón. He arrested the *alcalde* and marched him back to Guaiguaza, near Puerto Cabello, where Matos had a cacao plantation, which doubled as his anti-smuggling base of operations.¹⁴² There he held Marín prisoner and took his confession. Marín did not deny his involvement with trade with the Dutch. He recognized he had taxed Bustos and Molina and cited his extreme poverty as the reason for his actions. At the same time, he claimed he normally fought smuggling, unlike the *jueces de comisos* assigned to Morón or the *alcaldes de la Santa Hermandad* that preceded him. Marín claimed that these men, including the current *juez*, Mateo de Osorio, charged 2 pesos for each load exported at Morón.¹⁴³

The *alcaldes de la Santa Hermandad* carried out the *cabildo's* dirty work. They tended to intervene in open confrontations. The mayors and the justices of the peace used subtler and less openly violent strategies to keep Morón clear of the governor's appointees. When don Mateo de Osorio, who had operated at Morón under the protection of *Juez General de Comisos* don Diego de Matos, abandoned his post and fled the area, Governor Betancourt had to name a new *cabo a guerra* for the Valleys of Morón and Agua Caliente. In the summer of 1719, just days before St. John's Day,¹⁴⁴ Betancourt named don Pasqual Rubén de Lizarralde, *vecino* of Valencia, to the position.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Matos' smuggling and anti-smuggling operations are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 on Caracas.

¹⁴³ "Autos del descomiso de contrabando introducido por Francisco Marín," folios 49v, 52.

¹⁴⁴ June 24 is St. John's Day. The two major harvests of cacao in colonial Venezuela took place around St. John's Day and St. Lucia's Day, December 13.

¹⁴⁵ "Sobre suspensión del empleo de teniente y justicia mayor de Nirgua a don Juan de la Rocha," AGN, *Empleados de la Colonia*, Volume 3, Expediente 3, folios 36-77.

The local officials from Nirgua were not pleased that Osorio, from Valencia, was to be replaced by another man from Valencia. Lizarralde had served on the Valencia cabildo as alcalde de la Santa Hermandad seven years earlier, and during that time had clashed with Osorio, whom he called a liar, a smuggler, and a drunkard. He also criticized Osorio for marrying a mulatta and for being *compadres* with a mulatto named Gutiérrez.¹⁴⁶ Such opinions of pardos and the whites who fraternized with them would not go over well in the pardo republic. The Nirgua officials chose to stall. They waited a month and a half before responding officially to Lizarralde's appointment. On August 1, 1719, don Juan de la Rocha Betancourt y Ferrer, Betancourt's justice of the peace in Nirgua, and Standard-Bearer Marcos Velásquez de Aguilar, alcalde ordinario of Nirgua, finally wrote the governor. From Morón, thirty leagues northeast of Nirgua, where they noted they were on smuggling patrol, they communicated that they had no problem recognizing Lizarralde's authority, but that royal law required that he first present his credentials to the Nirgua cabildo. To date they had received no word of any such presentation, so they were unable to recognize him as *cabo a guerra*. De la Rocha and Velásquez de Aguilar went further, noting that the appointee had fifteen days to appear before the cabildo or else he would be penalized 500 pesos de oro. They added that given Lizarralde's failure to present himself, they doubted his ability to carry out the responsibilities assigned him by the governor.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ "Autos del descamino de contrabando introducido por Francisco Marín," AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-10-4, letter from don Pascual Rubén de Lizarralde to Governor don Joseph Francisco de Cañas, 1712, folios 430-437v.

¹⁴⁷ "Sobre suspensión del empleo," folios 40-42.

Lizarralde had tried to appear before the Nirgua cabildo the previous month but to no avail. With its principal members, namely De la Rocha and Velásquez, "dispersed," in the words of Francisco de Silva, Royal Standard-Bearer Real and acting *alcalde ordinario*, the cabildo was unable to convene and receive him. Silva assured Lizarralde that he had no problem recognizing his authority, but that he would have to wait until the *capitulares* returned.¹⁴⁸

Lizarralde was incensed. In a petition to the cabildo, he reminded its members that the governor, when he appointed Lizarralde, ordered that no one impede him in the exercise of his office, since it was of "real servicio." He noted he had taken the time and made the effort to go to Nirgua, even though it was unnecessary, since his was a military post, and the royal law on the presentation of credentials before local cabildos did not apply to military appointments. He did it, he claimed, out of respect and courtesy: "con toda paz, quietud, y urbanidad he tomado la molestia de venir a esta ciudad . . . a presentarme."¹⁴⁹ He ended his petition sternly, demanding that the Nirgua *maestre de campo* accept his petition as his formal presentation and warning that if any invasion or enemy hostility occurred along the coast, those who blocked his assumption would be held responsible.

Frustrated with Nirgua, Lizarralde headed east to try his luck in Valencia, which had jurisdiction over the Valley of Agua Caliente.¹⁵⁰ In contrast to the Nirgua cabildo,

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., Nirgua, July 24, 1719, folios 42v-44.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., folio 42v.

¹⁵⁰ The *cabos* and *jueces de comisos* assigned to Morón and Agua Caliente operated in two municipal territories: Morón was in Nirgua, Agua Caliente in Valencia. It was common for *jueces* to *comisos* to be assigned to two, sometimes three coastal settlements, but normally these were located within a single municipality.

the Valencia municipal council at first had no problems with Lizarralde's appointment. Standard-Bearer Joseph Francisco Rodríguez de Avila, one of the *alcaldes ordinarios*, received him on August 8, 1719, and recognized his post.¹⁵¹

Governor Betancourt, when he learned a couple of weeks later what had happened in Nirgua, was livid. He repeated the argument Lizarralde had made about military appointments and added that military officers were especially needed in Nirgua, where municipal officers encouraged rather than persecuted trade with the Dutch. The governor fined De la Rocha and Velásquez de Aguilar 500 pesos de oro each and ordered the Nirgua *maestre de campo* or *alférez* to collect the fines within forty days.¹⁵²

The Nirgua *alcalde* and justice of the peace were not impressed. In fact, between August 31 and October 28, the tensions at Morón had heightened. Lizarralde had gone there in hopes of assuming his post; instead, he was arrested by Juan de la Rocha, who sent him back to Nirgua.¹⁵³ De la Rocha also took action against *nirgüefíos* with sympathies for the governor's appointee to make sure Lizarralde's rejection was complete. When in late September Juan de Ortega tried to fulfill the governor's orders to respect Lizarralde's appointment, De la Rocha arrested him, rode him through town on a horse, and then threw him in jail.¹⁵⁴

Lizarralde's authority over Agua Caliente had diminished as well. While one Valencia *alcalde* recognized his appointment, the other did not, as he had his own plans for the route between Valencia and Puerto Cabello. The second *alcalde*, don Juan de

¹⁵¹ Ibid. Valencia, August 8, 1719, folio 44.

¹⁵² Ibid. Caracas, August 31, 1719, folios 46-48v.

¹⁵³ Ibid. Caracas, October 28, 1719, folios 49-52v.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. Nirgua, October 15, 1719, folios 53-54; Nirgua, October 17, 1719, folios 55-55v.

Landaeta, named his own juez to patrol the Valley of Agua Caliente. Cipriano de Lozada, Landaeta's appointee, had impeded Lizarralde from taking his position, claiming he was the only legitimate judge in the area.¹⁵⁵

By February of 1720, Governor Betancourt had had enough of De la Rocha's and the others' stonewalling. They, of course, insisted that they respected the governor's authority and prerogative to appoint his local representatives but that they were simply waiting for Lizarralde to follow established procedures. Betancourt, angered over Lizarralde's arrest and De la Rocha's failure to send Ortega to Caracas, suspended De la Rocha from his position as justice of the peace and ordered him to appear in Caracas.¹⁵⁶ He instructed the cabildo members of Nirgua to see this order carried out, and he commissioned Capitán de Guardia Joseph Fernández Rincón to carry the message to Nirgua.¹⁵⁷

Fernández Rincón did not quite make it to Nirgua. He reached Morón where, he informed the governor, he fell sick and failed to find a mule to carry him south to the city. At Morón he passed the message on to Feliciano Hidalgo, the Alcalde de la Santa Hermandad of Nirgua, who happened to be down at the point patrolling. Hidalgo, on March 13, 1720, sent word to Caracas that he would carry out the assignment.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., folio 50v.

¹⁵⁶ To justify his rough treatment of Ortega, De la Rocha informed the governor that Ortega was under investigation for various infractions. Betancourt determined the justice of the peace should hand over the inquiry's results to him. When the Lizarralde case closed in March 1720, the governor was still waiting for these documents.

¹⁵⁷ "Sobre suspensión del empleo," Caracas, February 22, 1720, folios 75-76.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. Morón, March 13, 1720, folios 77-77v.

It is not clear if Lizarralde ever assumed his post. If the Real Hacienda comisos deposits serve as any indication, he did not, as there is no deposit attributed to him as the arresting officer. Betancourt was removed from office a few months later, and it is doubtful that the Caracas *alcaldes ordinarios* who temporarily replaced him pursued his pending appointment.¹⁵⁹

The Nirgua municipal elite consistently accused the *jueces de comisos* assigned to Morón of colluding with Dutch captains. Many denied the charge, but under certain circumstances the Morón *juez de comisos* could feel comfortable, indeed justified, in having regular exchanges with the Dutch. Such is the case of don Ambrosio Bello, who took advantage of the unstated distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable smuggling to consolidate a small but successful operation at Morón. His activities came under scrutiny in 1733 when three men from a Dutch sloop, captained by his Irish trading partner, the above-mentioned Juan Blanco, were arrested when they tried to land their canoe, laden with textiles, at Morón.¹⁶⁰ Gabriel Amengual, commissioned by don Domingo Aróstegui, now the RCG commander at Puerto Cabello, arrested Juan Blanco, Juan Pascual Miquilarena, and Francisco Lorenzo Carambeo on Monday, September 14, 1733. The sloop's *práctico*, the Greek Juan Bautista, escaped. Blanco, the captain of the sloop, offered Amengual 2000 pesos to let them slip away as well. Unfazed, Amengual marched the three to the San Felipe in Puerto Cabello, from where they were transferred to the royal jail in Caracas. After each of the three revealed in their confessions ties to Bello, Lardizábal, commandant general of Venezuela, instructed the Nirgua justice of the

¹⁵⁹ Sucre, *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales*, p. 227.

¹⁶⁰ "Causa criminal sobre comercios ilícitos en las costas de esta provincia, remitida al tribunal del señor Comandante General por don Domingo Aróstegui," folios 149-284v.

peace, don Manuel Santiago de Ochoa, to investigate the possibility of Bello's involvement in smuggling at Morón.

Bello, a merchant (*comerciante*) originally from the Canary Islands, was cabo a guerra at Morón during the Andresote rebellion. Most nirgüños sympathized with Andresote and shared with him disdain for the RCG's commercial restrictions and the coastal patrols deployed to enforce them. Bello distinguished himself and consolidated his position at Morón by targeting those identified with Andresote. He concentrated his efforts on capturing El Indio Cachicamo, who led a band of smugglers along the coast between San Felipe and Nirgua.¹⁶¹ Bello also ran supplies to the RCG outpost at the mouth of the Yaracuy River at a time when the conflict made it difficult to get goods and people in and out of the fort. If this were not enough to provoke the ire of the nirgüños, he had affronted the justice of the peace, don Manuel Santiago de Ochoa, when he arrested his brother-in-law for smuggling. He had caught Maestre de Campo don Pablo Henríquez along the trail to Alpagatón.¹⁶²

Bello's pursuit of men identified with Andresote earned him the favor of the comandante general in Caracas. This gave him leeway in his local application of the law. In Nirgua he consolidated his position at the Punta de Morón by taking advantage of local animosities and long-standing business relations. He recruited men from Cabria, Taria, and Tucuragua, settlements traditionally left out of the cabildo-based smuggling networks. He also gave traders from these areas privileged access to Morón, where they

¹⁶¹ Ibid., folio 158.

¹⁶² Ibid., folio 219v. "Por la pica de Alpagatón." It is not clear from the testimony when exactly this happened.

could either trade with the Dutch or board Dutch sloops to sail to Curaçao. By the fall of 1733, his patrol had grown to at least 40 men.¹⁶³

Bello attracted clients and recruits by keeping his men well fed and well armed. This he was able to do because he had regular access to a dependable supplier. Before taking the post at Morón, he had served as *maestre* of a frigate captained by don Gerónimo Barroso. In 1728 the frigate was anchored off the coastal valley of Ocumare, where Bello met Juan Blanco, the ubiquitous Irishman who at the time was *práctico* on a Dutch sloop. They exchanged goods, establishing a relationship that continued over the next five years. In August of 1733, Blanco pulled his sloop the Hummingbird in at Morón. Bello came down to the beach to ask his old friend for powder, bullets, firearms, and victuals. According to Blanco, he made three trips to Morón over the next month, delivering shotguns, powder, bullets, hams, bacon, beef, wines, *aguardiente*, and various liquors.¹⁶⁴ On his third and final visit, Blanco left 300 pesos worth of goods, including shirts and hats for Bello's men.

Bello did not have the money to pay Blanco. In fact, cash was one of the items Blanco offered to Venezuelans who met him along the coast. Instead, Blanco and Bello's cabo, Soto, worked out a deal under which Bello paid by allowing Blanco to load cacao at Morón.¹⁶⁵ Each *zurrón* of cacao exported was worth 2 pesos, so when Blanco took on

¹⁶³ Ibid., folio 231 v.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., folios 158-159. The meat was listed as "carne del Norte."

¹⁶⁵ Cabo Soto was neither questioned nor detained in this case—he managed to escape to Mapubares in Coro. See Bello's confession in Ibid., Caracas, October 24, 1733, folio 190. Bello blamed Soto for most of the extra-legal trade that went on at Morón, claiming his subordinate made arrangements with the Dutch behind his back.

150 zurrone of cacao, the 300-pesos debt was covered.¹⁶⁶ Bello also made a repeated offer to his friend. Each time they met at Morón he made inquiries about Mateo Mina, one of Andresote's "captains" from San Nicolás who had fled to Curaçao. Bello wanted to capture him and sought Blanco's help. He said he would pay in cacao if Blanco could deliver the man to Morón.¹⁶⁷

Bello made his deals with Blanco publicly known. One witness, called by Ochoa when he was gathering evidence against the canario merchant, claimed he was present when Bello showed up at a ranch in Morón flaunting one of his purchases. He showed off 2 blunderbusses worth 50 pesos, a *caja de guerra* plus a young *negro* to play it, and some silver pesos to pay his men.¹⁶⁸

Bello offered patronage to traders from Nirgua's western settlements as well as pulperos who provisioned the Morón cacao estates. Juan Pascual Miquilarena, a pardo from Cabria and brother of Joseph Miquilarena,¹⁶⁹ traveled between his home town and Curaçao by way of Morón with Bello's knowledge and approval. Miquilarena, like Bello, had also gone against the general nirgüño sympathy for Andresote. With his brother Joseph, they had battled Andresote's followers in the mountains south of the Yaracuy River.

¹⁶⁶ A zurrón was roughly equivalent to 100 pounds.

¹⁶⁷ Nothing came of Bello's repeated requests.

¹⁶⁸ Pérez's testimony in "Sobre suspensión del empleo," August 4, 1733, folio 177-178.

¹⁶⁹ This is the same man from the case above involving the cabo in Cabria and the bogus bust of cacao: "Autos de comisos hechos por don Francisco Antonio Gómez, cabo de don Manuel de Ochoa, teniente de Nirgua, de diferentes cargas de cacao y bestias," 1747, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signature 2-463-1, folios 1-36.

Miquilarena went to Curaçao to seek treatment for various ailments and to buy textiles. He suffered from a hernia, *mal de orina*, *llagas de goma*, and *gálico*, ailments he claimed he acquired when he exhausted himself pursuing Andresote's followers.¹⁷⁰ When the local *curandero* in Nirgua, a man named Francisco Cardoso, failed to relieve his suffering, he decided to go to Curaçao, where he had been told he could find the care he needed. The other option was to go to Caracas, but the provincial capital was too far away and getting there too expensive. Besides, once on Curaçao, he would find the means to pay for his treatment. Joseph de Villa, a Spaniard resident in Barinas, had borrowed 20 zurrone of cacao from Miquilarena when he passed through Cabria on his way to Curaçao.¹⁷¹ In Willemstad he found Villa and collected the outstanding debt in textiles.¹⁷²

Miquilarena was on Blanco's sloop when it anchored at Morón. He was caught along with Blanco and one of Bello's soldiers, who was also on board. In his confession, Miquilarena explained that when he came ashore with his bundle of new clothes, he did not expect any trouble, for he had seen Bello's cabo come out to meet their canoe, and he knew that Blanco enjoyed Bello's favor.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Testimony of Sebastián Rodríguez, January 28, 1734, in "Causa criminal sobre comercios ilícitos en las costas de esta provincia, remitida al tribunal del señor Comandante General por don Domingo Aróstegui," folios 270-270v; and of don Juan Camacho, folios 271-271v.

¹⁷¹ A zurrón was a large leather sack that could hold about 100 pounds of cacao.

¹⁷² For medicine in the Yaracuy River valley during this period, see Alberto Silva Alvarez, "La medicina en el Yaracuy durante la época colonial," in *El Estado Yaracuy* (Caracas: Dirección de Cultura, Universidad Central de Venezuela), pp. 59-65.

¹⁷³ His confession is "Causa criminal sobre comercios ilícitos en las costas de esta provincia, remitida al tribunal del señor Comandante General por don Domingo Aróstegui," folios 187-188.

Bello also gave protection to pulperos who distributed smuggled goods locally at Morón. When Ochoa went to Bello's house at Morón to confiscate his personal belongings, he found two pulperos staying there. One was an Indian named Francisco Luis, the other a creole named Pedro Joseph Carvajal. One of the two lived on don Antonio Mendoza's cacao hacienda, one of the largest in the area (see above).¹⁷⁴

Lardizábal assigned the investigation in Nirgua to Ochoa, the justice of the peace. He collected damning testimony against Bello, which was not surprising, considering the witnesses he called. The witnesses were the Nirgua municipal elite, men who like Ochoa were eager to see Bello removed from Morón.¹⁷⁵

Lardizábal fulfilled his duty in detaining and trying Bello, but the juez de comisos at no point ran the risk of serious punishment. Unlike Blanco, sent to Spain on the first ship available once his confession had been taken, or Miquilarena, who was sentenced to two years of hard labor in Cádiz, Bello enjoyed the lighter side of the law. His brother, who lived in La Guaira, put up the bail that released Bello from the Casas Reales jail and vouched that Ambrosio would not leave the city of Caracas during the criminal proceedings.¹⁷⁶ In March of 1734, Bello, anxious to return to his work along the Golfo Triste, offered to pay an indulto of 120 pesos. On March 17, 1734, Lardizábal countered

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., folio 165. The testimony does not make clear which of the two lived at Mendoza's plantation.

¹⁷⁵ Those who testified before Ochoa included Nirgua cabildo and militia members such as Captain Juan Lorenzo Gómez, alcalde ordinario; Captain Joseph Fernando Salamanca, persona principal who enjoyed conqueror's privileges (see above); Standard-Bearer Pablo Rumualdo Pacheco, assistant to Sergeant Major Juan Francisco Sánchez Mejías; and Sergeant Francisco Belis. Ibid., folios 172-179.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., folio 165.

with a proposed fine of 40 pesos. Bello quickly accepted, paid the fine, and left Caracas.¹⁷⁷

Prácticos, traders, and arrieros who had not secured the protection or blind eye of one or more of the local authorities ran the risk of their combined animosity. Authorities who were normally rivals were willing to collaborate to remove common threats—people who operated outside of or beyond established systems of patronage. Such is the case for three Spaniards accused of illegally trading with the Dutch and of violently resisting a military patrol. Members of don Carlos Felipe de Valenzuela's Morón and Agua Caliente patrol, members of Gabriel Bautista del Campo's coastal patrols,¹⁷⁸ and eye witnesses at Morón and along the route between Morón and Tucuragua claimed that a large group of men violently resisted government patrols at two consecutive landings on September 4, 1745. At the mouth of the Agua Caliente River, a group of Venezuelan traders sailing in a Dutch sloop fought off Valenzuela and his men when they tried to stop them from loading the sloop with tobacco and cacao.¹⁷⁹ Later the same day, the sloop put in at the Punta de Morón where the traders disembarked with loads of textiles. They were four creoles and three peninsulares: The creoles, all pardos, were Joseph Becerril, Jacob Becerril, Lizardo, and Alfonso. Two of the peninsulares came from the Canary Islands. They were Diego Ravelo and Juan Cabrera, better known as El Catire (Blondie).¹⁸⁰ Francisco Romero was originally from Barcelona, Catalonia.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., folio 234.

¹⁷⁸ See the following chapter on San Felipe for more on these patrols.

¹⁷⁹ "Autos contra José Becerril y otros por haber éstos saltado en tierra en la Punta de Morón con ropa de extranjeros," December 16, 1745, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 2-490-1, folios 1-2, 4.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., folios 47v-48.

They chose a bad time to come ashore. Some of the soldiers that served under Gabriel Bautista del Campo were passing through the Morón area, on their way back to San Felipe after picking up powder and bullets in Puerto Cabello. They gave chase.

It was a lackluster pursuit, considering the fugitives traded as they fled west towards the Yaracuy. A young Canary Islander, carrying goods to Puerto Cabello for don Miguel Jacinto's widow, ran into them in the plains directly south of Morón. Antonio González de Sosa, who when deposed claimed he was in need of a cloak, bought from Joseph Becerril 10 varas of camlet, 3.5 varas of red cloth, 1.5 reales worth of white thread, and one kerchief. González de Sosa claimed he saw Joseph Becerril sell to "un negro" 100 pesos worth of clothing. Joseph Becerril then paid off the men who helped transport the goods inland. He gave a muleteer 10 varas of calico, and to a boy named Luis de Sosa, 20 pesos worth of textiles.¹⁸² Del Campo's soldiers stopped the pursuit in Cabria—they either lost them or just gave up.

The patrol members made passing reference to the three peninsulares, having concentrated on the three creoles, yet Del Campo requested the Nirgua justice of the peace arrest not the Becerrils but Ravelo, Romero, and Cabrera. All three worked the intra-provincial trade routes, transporting others' goods to market. Soto testified that the three moved cacao down the Yaracuy River for the RCG.¹⁸³ Romero, after serving as a

¹⁸¹ From testimony of Juan Baltasar Caldera, soldier in Del Campo's guard, *Ibid.*, folios 3-3v; and the confessions of the three peninsulares, folios 49-54. Caldera and other soldiers called to testify by Del Campo identified all the creoles as "pardos" and the other three men as "blancos isleños." This was obviously incorrect for Romero. Ravelo, in his confession revealed he came from La Laguna, on the island of Tenerife. Cabrera provided no details beyond his canario origin.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, testimony of González de Sosa, March 23, 1746, folios 6v-7. He was born in the Canary Islands and lived in Tucuragua.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, folio 106.

soldier in Puerto Cabello, worked a number of jobs. He was for a time the overseer on Isidro Vidal's cacao plantation in Guaiguaza.¹⁸⁴ Since then he spent most of his time dealing in perishables in Nirgua, Valencia, and San Felipe.¹⁸⁵ Cabrera, who made his home in Agua Caliente, also dedicated most of his energies to internal trade. One witness commented that he frequently worked the route that connected the Segovia Highlands with the tobacco-producing piedmont, traveling between Carora, Barquisimeto, and Guanare.¹⁸⁶ He bought cattle in the llanos and transported it to Nirgua; he also had his own team of mules. Ravelo also had a number of jobs. He took care of other people's cacao plantations, probably as an overseer; he ran a mule train in Nirgua and San Felipe; he worked for the RCG doing river transport; and he owned a team of oxen. Property owners hired him to clear their fields of stones and trees.¹⁸⁷

Most of Del Campo's evidence against the three peninsulares came from residents of Taría, Cabria, and Tucuragua. Manuel Urbina and Isidro Bocanegra, both from Cabria, provided Del Campo with enough evidence to request that Ochoa arrest the three peninsulares. After their initial testimony, neither could be located for confirmation or cross-examination. Bocanegra became sick, and Urbina slipped across the border into Coro. It was reported that someone killed him in the town of Carrizal; it seems Urbina had a number of enemies, spread out across the province.

The investigation and prosecution of Ravelo, Romero, and Cabrera did not follow established procedures for smuggling cases. Don Manuel Santiago de Ochoa, justice of

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., folio 107v.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., folio 49v.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., folio 118.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., folios 106-107v.

the peace in Nirgua, made no effort to confiscate the three accused smugglers' personal possessions; nor did he try to locate the large load of textiles they were accused of bringing in to Nirgua. Del Campo did not ask him to do this, nor did he request that don Carlos Felipe de Valenzuela find and confiscate Cabrera's property at his residence in Agua Caliente. As instructed by Del Campo, Ochoa sent the three straight to the fort of San Felipe at Puerto Cabello, and there they worked, without pay, for 14 months. In early 1745 they were transferred to the royal jail in Caracas, where again they languished. It was not until June of 1748 that the governor, Luis Francisco de Castellanos, passed sentence on them. He found them guilty of illicit trade and violent resistance to Valenzuela and his men, and he sentenced them to the time served plus six months of hard labor at the La Guaira presidio.¹⁸⁸ They also had to pay their respective court costs.¹⁸⁹

Cabrera and Ravelo did not serve the six months in La Guaira. They convinced the court's medical advisor that they were too old and too sick. The governor allowed them to pay 35 pesos to hire others to do six months of hard labor at La Guaira. After two months of work, Romero also found that he was too old for the task. He too paid for someone to take his spot.

Conclusion

Of the four districts studied, Nirgua was the one in which extra-legal trade and transport played the largest role in the local economy. Nirgua was the only one of the four that lacked a formal outpost of the monopoly trade company, the Royal Guipuzcoa

¹⁸⁸ Governor Castellanos, *Ibid.*, June 21, 1748, folios 124-125.

¹⁸⁹ These were as follows: For Cabrera, 52 pesos 7 reales; for Ravelo, 52 pesos 3 reales; and for Romero, 48 pesos 2 reales.

Company. Nirgüefío producers and traders had to exit their jurisdiction to trade their agricultural products in legally sanctioned markets. More convenient was the Punta de Morón.

Outsiders, like the governors in Caracas and subaltern officials assigned to Nirgua, combined the prevalence of smuggling in the area with the Crown-sanctioned political privileges of the local pardo populace to create an overstated image of a nirgüefío smuggling machine, operated by the pardo municipal elite, who from the district capital, directed all smuggling activities by all nirgüefío residents. The barrage of accusations and invectives came in large part as a result of nirgüefíos' successful effort to stave off Caracas' attempts to limit Nirgua's autonomy.

The claims that nirgüefíos enjoyed a monopoly over smuggling in their district and that they were hopelessly insubordinate to colonial officials reflect less the actual workings of smuggling and politics in Nirgua and more efforts to undermine nirgüefío political power and the limited advantages in smuggling it provided. As seen in the case of Manuel Santiago de Ochoa, justices of the peace were more likely to integrate their interests with nirgüefíos' interests than to challenge them. Nirgua's municipal elite exercised unequal control over one of the two principal smuggling routes that crossed the jurisdiction. Neither they nor their rivals secured an enduring advantage at Morón, the fulcrum in the area's smuggling.

Circumstances in the district did not lend themselves to the kind of informal monopoly attributed to nirgüefíos. This contrasts with San Felipe, on the other side of the Yaracuy River, where two distinct smuggling operations developed, attaining much greater integration and influence than Nirgua's pardo elite could ever hope to achieve.

CHAPTER 6

CIVIL AND CLERICAL SYNDICATES ON THE SAN FELIPE FRONTIER

Cuando [a] los criados con el corto salario que le dan sus amos les mandan y obligan a que les sirvan puntualmente, limpios y aseados, y en tan buen traje que el salario no es suficiente para el gasto.

—Friar Marcelino de San Vicente¹

Introduction: San Felipe el Fuerte

The residents of Cerritos de Cocorote, located along the Yaracuy River, also endured alarmist accusations regarding their dedication to trade with the Dutch. The river valley formed part of the jurisdiction of Barquisimeto until 1730, when the Crown granted local petitioners' requests for a city. Cocorote became San Felipe el Fuerte, and Barquisimeto lost control over what had been its most troublesome and economically vibrant precinct. Before 1730 outsiders portrayed smuggling in the area similarly to the ways Nirgua and nirgüeños were portrayed, though without the fixation on color. After 1730 smuggling in San Felipe, at least by the civil population, ceased to be a pressing issue in the province. Complaints mounted, both within the newly formed district and around the province, against San Felipe's Capuchin missionaries, accused of using the

¹ Capuchin Friar Marcelino de San Vicente to Governor Antonio José Álvarez de Abreu, in Friar Marcelino's "Cuestión en que se pregunta se sería lícito a los misioneros capuchinos de esta Provincia de Caracas usar de medios prohibidos por ley humana para la conversión y manutención de los Indios cuando para estos fines no alcanzan los medios que no están prohibidos," from AGN, Comisos, Volume 12, Expediente 7, folios 167-167v. In English: "[As] when servants, with the scant salary their masters give them, are ordered and obliged to be punctual, clean, tidy, and so well dressed that the salary is not sufficient to cover the costs."

missions under their direction and Indians under their care to engage in extra-legal commerce.

Other major changes coincided with the founding of the city. The area celebrated its first cabildo meetings, received its first governor-appointed justice of the peace, and experienced the establishment of a RCG commercial and military outpost, as the monopoly trade company sought to tap into the booming cacao economy. Sanfelipeños did not suddenly desist from trading with the Dutch. The extra-legal exchanges continued, but except for the complaints against the Capuchins and occasional arrest of their canoeists and muleteers, smuggling cases dropped off dramatically in the decade after San Felipe's incorporation. The reason for this was the tight control exercised over extra-legal trade by the area's two smuggling networks: one managed by the mission system and the other by San Felipe's extraordinary first justice of the peace, don Juan Angel de Larrea. The successful elimination of competition, the satisfaction of both local impulses to trade with the Dutch and RCG demand for local produce, and the effective surveillance of San Felipe's main trade and transportation routes kept smuggling operations smooth and for the most part out of the colonial record books. Eventually the passing of De Larrea and the weakening of the mission system's position in the area led to greater competition, open conflict, and a return to publicly voiced concerns over rampant smuggling in San Felipe.

The Yaracuy River Valley: The Early Years of Cocorote and Barquisimeto

The Yaracuy River and the valley that it has shaped represent the primary drainage system for the Chichiriviche Coastal Plain.² The valley shared with the smaller valleys

² John V. Lombardi, *Venezuela: The Search for Order, the Dream of Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 16-17.

that dotted the province's central coast a climate and soil suitable for cacao cultivation. In contrast to places like Turiamo, Choroní, and Tuasana, the topography of the valley facilitated communication between the sea, the coast, and the interior. Whereas the Central Coast Range dramatically demarcated the narrow coastal valleys from the larger interior valleys of Caracas, Aragua, and Valencia, the location of the Yaracuy at the meeting point of the Venezuelan Andes and the Central Coast Range afforded a gradual transition from beach through alluvial fan to mountains. San Felipe was called Cerritos de Cocorote in the early eighteenth century before it was granted the status of city. It was located 3 leagues up the Yaracuy River from the river's mouth (see Figure 6).

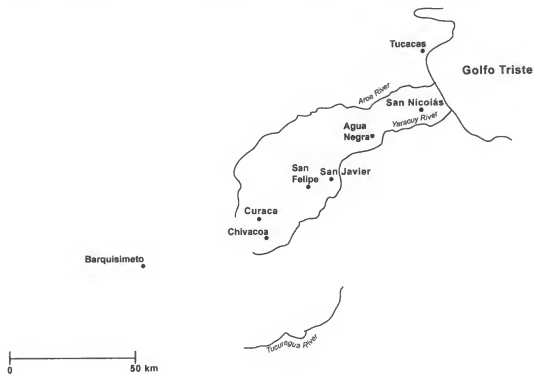


Figure 6. The District of San Felipe

The river was, by the early eighteenth century, navigable in canoes and small boats between the settlement, its fields, and the sea.³ Geographically, the Segovia Highlands back the Yaracuy River valley to the west, while the Cordillera Central separates it from the central valleys to the east. Because of the gentle transition from coast to mountain, the San Felipe area provided easy access for transportation and communication between the coast, the Segovia Highlands, and the Llanos to the south

The river was the most important natural feature in the valley. Missionaries founded their Indian pueblos on its shores, the earliest immigrants who came pushing the cacao frontier staked out claims to properties bordering the river, and the Crown, from before the founding of the city of San Felipe, tried to regulate traffic along it. The Yaracuy allowed settlers, growers, and traffickers to move goods quickly and easily between the cacao plantations and points of exchange along the mouth of the river, or get the goods down to the mouth to then be transferred to coastal launches for transport to Puerto Cabello. The river was convenient, but it had not always been navigable. Soon after they founded the missions of San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras and Nuestra Señora del Carmen, the Capuchin friars had the Indians work the river's banks to make it accessible by canoe. They opened chutes (in Spanish, *bocas*) and manufactured canoes for water transport.⁴

³ Cisneros, *Descripción exacta*, p. 152. See also Lombardi, *People and Places*, pp. 7-23.

⁴ The reports made by the Barquisimeto cabildo to the Crown include this information. See Volume II, Document 195, "Cédula al gobernador de Venezuela ordenándole informe sobre los autos hechos en orden a la fundación de dos pueblos de españoles en Buría y Cerritos de Cocorote por los misioneros capuchinos, y también sobre el derribo de casas de los indios en los Cerritos, ordenado por el alcalde de Barquisimeto," El Pardo, January 29, 1727, p. 170; Document 190, "La ciudad de Nueva Segovia de Barquisimeto presenta al rey memorial para justificar lo ejecutado por uno de sus alcaldes al destruir las casas de los indios de los Cerritos de Cocorote y pidiendo se tengan en cuenta sus derechos y que se reprima el comercio ilícito ejercido por los indios del valle de Yaracuy, oyendo además sus alegatos respecto a la petición formulada por los misioneros capuchinos para fundar dos nuevos pueblos de españoles: uno en los mencionados

The city of San Felipe el Fuerte and its jurisdiction were carved out of the municipal territory controlled by Barquisimeto. The highlands city of Barquisimeto had struggled from Cocorote's founding to keep the inhabitants of its only coastal community in line. The efforts were frequent and at times violent, and they repeatedly failed. These conflicts went on until King Philip V granted Cerritos de Cocorote the status of city, thus divorcing it from Barquisimeto.

Spanish immigrants, many of them from the Canary Islands, creoles from Barquisimeto, Coro, the central valleys, and from as far away as Mérida and Santa Fé de Bogotá, as well as Dutch from Curaçao had been flocking to the area since the end of the previous century.⁵ The Yaracuy River valley marked the western frontier in the expansion of cacao cultivation, and the myriad immigrants who settled in the area sought their piece of the action. They were not settling an unoccupied area, however. There existed a number of pueblos de Indios, along the river and on the coast, approaching the Aroa River to the west. According to Licentiate Juan Tomás Fort, chaplain in the pueblo de Indios of Guama, in 1765 the local pueblos de indios included: Guama, Cocorote, Las Tinajas, San Nicolás, and San Francisco Javier.⁶ In his report to the governor of the province, done in 1764, José Luis de Cisneros stated that there were three, each with its own priest and corregidor, and all growing cacao and low-grade tobacco.⁷

Cerritos y otro en la sabana de Buría," s.f. p. 157; and Document 189, "Oposición puesta por los vecinos de Barquisimeto a que los misioneros capuchinos fundasen una villa o ciudad en los llamados Cerritos de Cocorote," Caracas, December 1, 1725, p. 156-160. All in Padre Buenaventura de Carrocería, *Misión de los capuchinos en los llanos de Caracas* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1972).

⁵ León Trujillo, "Pueblos de misión," in *El Estado Yaracuy*, p. 50.

⁶ Altolaguirre y Duvalé, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, pp. 97-98.

⁷ Cisneros, *Descripción exacta*, p. 155. Fort counted as pueblos de indios the mission of San Francisco Javier de Aguas Culebras and Cocorote. Cisneros did not, probably considering the second part of the

The rapidly expanding exchange between Cocorote settlers, missionaries, and cacao producers and the Dutch, either in Tucacas or along the coast, did not go unnoticed by colonial officials. During the War of Spanish Succession, Governor Berroterán sought to reduce the disturbingly high volume of trade with Tucacas, though probably with little success. In 1706, he issued a sweeping instructive to the *alcaldes ordinarios* of Barquisimeto to investigate the illicit and immoral behavior reported as rampant in the area and to clear the Cerritos de Cocorote of smugglers. He noted that he had ordered them to do this just two years earlier.⁸

The relationship between the Barquisimeto municipal elite and the cacao growers and smugglers of the Yaracuy River valley would have been more cordial if the former had been successful in exercising some control over the latter, or if the latter had shared in the wealth they earned in trading with Curaçao. Cocorote was a relatively new concern for Barquisimeto. The city's main focus had historically been the other towns of the Segovia Highlands, settled by Spaniards and creoles in the late sixteenth century and densely populated by whites and Indians. Cocorote was a day and a half journey from Barquisimeto,⁹ and the jurisdiction's law enforcement officials, both the cabildo officers and the justices of the peace, could not divide their time between the highlands and the

Spanish and creole settlement of Cerritos de Cocorote. This accounts for the discrepancy in the two counts, carried out just a year apart from each other.

⁸ Governor Berroterán to the *alcaldes ordinarios* of Barquisimeto, Caracas, March 1, 1706. Governor Berroterán was informed that in the Valleys of Barquisimeto "asisten diferentes personas sin conocer su vecindad viven ociosamente viven libres y lisensiosamente en juegos prohibidos, ocupaciones ilícitas." He ordered the Barquisimeto *alcaldes* to "limpiar la tierra de los vagabundos que no tienen oficios ni haciendas de que mantenerse." From "Causa criminal fecha de oficio en virtud de mandamiento del Gobierno contra Lorenzo de Valladares sobre trato y comercios con extranjereros enemigos de la Real Corona," AANH, RP, Judiciales, Signatura A10-C9-D97, folios 1-1v.

⁹ David J. Robinson, ed., *Mil leguas por América: De Lima a Caracas, 1740-1741, Diario de don Miguel de Santisteban* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1992), p. 249. San Felipe, "que dista de esta ciudad [de Barquisimeto] un día y medio de camino."

coastal lowlands and be successful in both. As the Cocorote settlement and its residents' interactions with the Dutch expanded, Barquisimeto officials turned to a strategy that had been common in the Spanish Caribbean from the beginning of the seventeenth century.¹⁰ Since they could not stop what went on in Cocorote, they tried to destroy Cocorote.

The inhabitants of the Segovia Highlands were not opposed to trading with the Dutch. They opposed being excluded. Some managed to work themselves into the system, though never achieving any kind of partnership with or real benefit from the Cocorote cacao growers. For example, in March 1719 the customs officer of Barquisimeto, don Juan Gonzalo de Carmenatís, was fined 10 pesos for selling to himself textiles he had confiscated from smugglers in the town of San Nicolás.¹¹

Nonetheless, Barquisimeto suffered from its inability to control or exploit fully Cocorote's economic expansion. Miguel de Santisteban, traveling from Lima to Caracas in 1740 and 1741, passed a few days in Barquisimeto in September of 1741. He was impressed by the scarcity of specie in the city, noting that transactions were usually carried out using muscovado sugar as the common tender.¹² Barquisimeto's efforts to dictate settlement, production, and trade in Cerritos de Cocorote came in part from a pressing need for hard currency, especially silver pesos. With cacao, the residents of Cocorote could not only purchase textiles, slaves, iron tools, alcohol, and perishables from Dutch traders, but they could also barter it for silver coinage, jerky and hides from the plains, tobacco from Barinas, not to mention Barquisimeto's muscovado sugar.

¹⁰ For the early seventeenth-century application of this policy in the Caribbean, see Antonio Benítez-Rojo's discussion of the Devastations in Hispaniola, the ban on tobacco cultivation in Venezuela, and the near application of this policy in eastern Cuba in his *The Repeating Island*, pp. 43-52.

¹¹ AGN, Real Hacienda, Penas de Cámara, Volume 39/40, folio 102v.

¹² Robinson, ed., *Mil leguas*, p. 249.

Further evidence of the material and productive gap between Cocorote and Barquisimeto comes from local tax records. Transport, import, and export taxes were collected at key points along rural mule trails, or *veredas*. The rights to collect these fees were auctioned annually to the highest bidder. Piñero, in his study of San Felipe's eighteenth-century cacao economy, includes a comparison of the prices paid each year for the Barquisimeto and Cocorote mule trails in the 1720s, when the area was still under Barquisimeto's control.¹³ The data for the two roads overlap for three years: 1722, 1724, and 1725. In 1722, tithe collection along the *vereda de Barquisimeto* was auctioned for 665 pesos; tithe collection along the *vereda de los valles* went for 3,800 pesos. In 1724, the Barquisimeto *vereda*'s auction price was 815 pesos, and Cocorote's, 3,300 pesos. And in 1725, the difference between the winning bids was 3,180 pesos: 920 pesos paid for collection along the Barquisimeto route and 4,100 pesos for the Cocorote route.

The municipal officials of Barquisimeto led a series of attacks against the settlement, each with the goal of permanently dislodging and dispersing the settlers and thereby ridding the jurisdiction of chronic smuggling. The first major attack came in 1710. In 1717 Governor Betancourt ordered the inhabitants of Cerritos de Cocorote to abandon the site—an order that was ignored. This was followed in 1724 by the greatest and most destructive excursion, a raid led by Barquisimeto's *Alcalde Mayor* don Luis López Baraona and *Maestro de Campo* Captain Francisco Adán Granados. The *alcalde* and his followers burned over sixty houses, as well as the local church.¹⁴

¹³ Piñero, *The Town of San Felipe*, Table 16, p. 95.

¹⁴ Perazzo, *Historia del Estado Yaracuy*, p. 44; Felice Cardot, *La rebelión de Andresote*, p. 40, includes the information on the church that was burned down.

The Barquisimeto cabildo continued to press. In 1726, its members, citing rampant trade with the Dutch, petitioned the king for permission to "demolish in the plains, valleys, and hills of Cocorote." They also claimed that the local church, which, according to Cocorote priests and residents, had been burned in the 1724 raid, needed to be torn down, since it had been seriously damaged by a hurricane in previous years.¹⁵

The Crown prohibited all river traffic in the early 1720s. On September 10, 1721, Governor Alvarez de Abreu ordered the Barquisimeto corregidor to announce the prohibition of all navigation and trade on the Yaracuy River. The governor established severe penalties for violators of this bando: death for those caught on the river and four years of exile in one of Spain's presidios for those who witnessed yet failed to report activities on the river.¹⁶

The territory assigned to San Felipe was relatively small compared to the province's other prominent cities (Caracas, Valencia, Barquisimeto), but the fertile cacao lands around the city and the ease of access by both land and sea made the area coveted. San Felipe was bounded by the sea to the north, by the Villa de San Carlos to the south, by Nirgua to the east, and by Barquisimeto to the west.¹⁷ Rivers and bodies of water served to demarcate borders: San Felipe's territory extended from the head waters of the Quebrada Guararute in the Serranía del Poniente to the quebrada's point of entry into the

¹⁵ "El cabildo secular de la ciudad de Nuestra Señora de Barquisimeto pide a S.M. licencia para demoler las poblaciones de los llanos, valles y cerritos de Cocorote, por ser amparo de comercio ilícito con los holandeses. Así mismo quieren destruir la iglesia o capilla, que estaba ya arruinada por un huracán," 1726. From Archivo General de las Indias (hereinafter AGI), Santo Domingo 778-A, included as Document 909 in Marco Dorta, *Materiales para la historia de la cultura*, p. 138.

¹⁶ "Autos sobre decomiso de cantidad de fanegas de cacao en los puertos de Tucacas y Cuare," November 9, 1730, AGN, Comisos, Volume 12, Expediente 7, folios 171-173.

¹⁷ Cisneros, *Descripción exacta*, p. 154.

Yaracuy River; it followed the edge of the Serranía Contraria to the mouth of the Arroyo Tucuragua, which also flowed into the Yaracuy River, and then followed this river into the sea. Along the coast, the jurisdiction included all the beach west to the Aroa River and east back to the origins of the Guararute.¹⁸

The Guararute originated quite close to the coast, 14 leagues to the southwest, in fact. The Crown, when it broke off San Felipe from Barquisimeto, left under the latter's jurisdiction the Indian towns of Chivacoa and Curaca.¹⁹ The upper reaches of the coastal valley system did not form part of the new district. San Felipe, then, consisted of a small strip of the coast and some but not all of the fertile coastal valleys of the Yaracuy River and its tributaries. Merchants, traders, and producers from the Llanos and from Segovia Highlands settlements like Barquisimeto, El Tocuyo, and Carora had limited options for getting goods to and from the coastal market with relative alacrity. They could cross over into New Granada and go through Maracaibo; they could send goods down and up the Orinoco and its tributaries; they could go east to Nirgua and Valencia and then north to Puerto Cabello; or they could take the quickest, most direct, and easiest route through the Yaracuy River valley and down to the various points of exchange along the coast: the mouth of the Yaracuy, the mouth of the Aroa River, the Punta de Morón in Nirgua, or, if they chose the legal route along the camino real, along the coastal trails to the port of Puerto Cabello.

Each entrance into and exit from a precinct governed or controlled by the local cabildo, teniente justicia mayor, corregidor, or brigand chief brought with it the potential

¹⁸ Altolaguirre y Duvale, ed., *Relaciones geográficas*, p. 97.

¹⁹ Curaca is known today as Campo Elías.

for legal and extralegal duties to be charged. The further the journey from the point of origin to the final point of export, the greater risk not only of losing the load, but also of running up considerable taxes, presents, bribes, and extortions. From Barquisimeto, the cheapest way to get to the Dutch was to go through San Felipe, even after the latter gained autonomy.

Before the pueblo de Cerritos de Cocorote became the city of San Felipe, the area produced numerous contraband cases, all of them prosecuted by officials based in Barquisimeto against local residents of Cocorote. The cases against local residents dropped off dramatically from the time the city was founded through the beginning of the War of Jenkins' Ear. During this period, roughly the decade of the 1730s, smuggling cases prosecuted and reported to Caracas involved outsiders trying to bring materials into the district. By the following decade, the local consensus between local and provincial government authorities and patrons had broken down, and smuggling cases involving local sanfelipeños rose in numbers. Roughly at the same time, while many local residents and government officials could not work out an accord among themselves, they did agree with the general animosity and envy towards the extensive, thriving system of production and trade the Capuchin friars had developed across the province, particularly the missions in San Felipe. The struggles over extra-legal trade in San Felipe during these years can be understood according to these two social dynamics, one civil, the other clerical, one dependent on the many roles and talents of one individual, the other integrated into the Capuchin mission system.

The Civil Network: San Felipe and Don Juan Angel de Larrea

The Crown, in a Real Cédula of November 6, 1729, officially recognized the importance of the Cerritos de Cocorote settlement, granting it the status of city. The

newly established city of San Felipe el Fuerte, named so to honor the Spanish king, held its first cabildo meeting a year and a half later on May 1, 1731.²⁰ Here the city's vecinos elected its first cabildo officers: don Gerónimo Montañez y Machado and don Manuel Gerónimo de Tovar, *alcaldes*; don Bernardo de Matos, *regidor decano*; don Marcos de Figueroa, *fiel ejecutor*; don Sebastián Ramos Morado, *sargento mayor*; and don Francisco Viñas and don Juan Angel de Larrea were confirmed as *escribano* and Teniente de Justicia Mayor, respectively.²¹ If one compares the composition of San Felipe's first cabildo with that of the one that met to receive the ill-fated Teniente Basazábal, one finds that with the exception of the teniente—De Larrea had died a few months before—the names are the same. San Felipe's political leaders had moved around some, swapping cabildo positions, but the municipal body was basically the same as it had been since its inception. The same handful of local plantation owners and merchants dominated the cabildo, while the same man, De Larrea, represented the provincial government for nearly a decade.²²

Not a member of the cabildo, but a key player in the struggles over contraband in the Yaracuy Valley, was the head of the coastal patrols, established in 1734. Don Gabriel Bautista del Campo shared with don Juan Angel de Larrea the distinction of occupational

²⁰ Nicolás Perazzo, "Hacia la historia de San Felipe," in Manuel C. Pinto, ed., *Documentos para la historia de la ciudad de San Felipe el Fuerte* (Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1969), pp. 14-15.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²² See Trujillo, *Motín y sublevación en San Felipe*. De Larrea will be discussed at length in the following pages.

longevity in military, administrative posts that were characterized by rapid turnover. Del Campo was still in charge of the patrullas volantes in September of 1749.²³

Given the many years De Larrea and Del Campo served in the same positions in San Felipe, one might assume that they carried out numerous smuggling arrests and confiscations in the San Felipe area. Local officials charged with countering smuggling made a good part of their living by the confiscations they performed. The more arrests they made, the more commissions they charged. Also, given the fact that De Larrea served almost ten years as justice of the peace and Del Campo made the direction of the coastal patrols a career commitment, one might also assume that the governors in Caracas gave them their support because they consistently proved effective anti-smuggling agents.

If one concentrates solely on the San Felipe jurisdiction, especially during the 1730s, the documentary record does not bear this out. The Real Hacienda comisos deposits show anti-smuggling activity during this period. San Felipe, like all other major settlements in the province, was required to submit the monies collected from confiscations to the Real Hacienda officers in the provincial capital.²⁴ The deposits from contraband confiscations done in the Yaracuy River valley area, listed first as Cerritos de Cocorote and after May of 1731 as San Felipe, declined sharply after the pueblo de

²³ See "Auto que sigue don Martín Pérez de Castro sobre haberle maltratado de obras y palabras don Gabriel Bautista del Campo, vecino de la ciudad de San Felipe," October 1, 1749, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 2-588-1, folios 1-95v.

²⁴ I have found alcabala books specific to San Felipe, but I have found no Real Hacienda volumes entitled either Libro Común y General or Comisos, that is, specific to San Felipe. In Caracas, the amounts received from confiscations and the ways in which this money was spent were recorded, from 1718 to 1722 and from 1740 to 1757 in distinct Libros de Comisos (AGN, Real Hacienda, Volumes 231 to 233). These data were at some point copied into the volumes of Libro General y Común, which normally included a section dedicated to comiso and descamino deposits and the ways in which they were spent (carga y descarga). For the years under consideration (1693-1757), see AGN, Real Hacienda, Volumes 34-35, 37-49, 51-63A.

Cocorote became the city of San Felipe. Only two of the twenty deposits correspond with San Felipe. The first, recorded in Caracas on Tuesday, June 2, 1733, registered the deposit of 1210 pesos 3 reales. This was money that remained for the Crown after a load of textiles caught at the mouth of the Yaracuy River by don Juan de Fuentes, *comisionario* for Governor Juan Sebastián García de la Torre, was auctioned in San Felipe for 2031 pesos.²⁵ Fuentes submitted the confiscated goods to don Joseph de Oyarzábal, the San Felipe *factor* of the RCG, who carried out the *comisos* proceedings. The second entry dates from December 10, 1744. The soldiers in the beach patrol under don Gabriel Bautista del Campo caught a canoe on the Aroa River and confiscated a small load of unspecified goods.²⁶ The amount deposited was negligible: 7 pesos, 4 reales, and 29.67 maravedís. For both, two points should be noted. First, the two took place on the coast, at the mouths of the Yaracuy and Aroa rivers; second, they both involved imported textiles.

A review of the Real Hacienda books also reveals a minimum number of arrests attributed to Del Campo and De Larrea. Del Campo is listed as the arresting official in none of the entries, and De Larrea is listed three times. Of these, two resulted from his work as *juez de indultos de negros de mala entrada*, and both occurred outside of San Felipe. In May of 1737 De Larrea sent to the Real Hacienda in Caracas 213 pesos 2 reales 17.33 maravedís for a *negro bozal* caught in El Tocuyo. He had been auctioned there for 230 pesos. A year later on June 16, 1738, the royal treasury received 112 pesos

²⁵ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, *Comisos*, Volume 49, folios 188v-189.

²⁶ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, *Comisos*, Volume 56, folio 164v. The entry lists "efectos."

4 reales from the auction of a black woman—*una negra*—De Larrea had caught in Barquisimeto.²⁷

The third entry came from the confiscation of cacao some people were trying to get out of the province.²⁸ De Larrea in the spring of 1738 confiscated 4 fanegas 57 pounds of cacao in a spring (*caño*) right by the Chichiriviche port. He auctioned the fruit for 63 pesos 2 reales; the Crown eventually received 31 pesos 6 reales 17.33 maravedís.

The coastal patrols off Puerto Cabello and San Felipe provide one possible explanation for the dramatic decline in terrestrial and beach confiscations in the region after the city's founding.²⁹ The founding of San Felipe el Fuerte and the establishment of the RCG corresponded roughly in time. One might assume that the company's coast guard activity led to the drop in descaminos: intervention shifted from the river, trails, and beaches to the sea. This is probably the case in many parts of the province, and one would expect to see a general shift in confiscations from exports to imports. Such is not the case for San Felipe and the waters of the Golfo Triste off the mouth of the Yaracuy River. The RCG corsair confiscation records in Caracas include no captures carried out in the waters off San Felipe during the years under consideration. In fact, from 1730 through the end of the 1750s, the RCG books indicate no comisos carried out off San Felipe.³⁰ The RCG profoundly affected smuggling in and through the Yaracuy River

²⁷ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volume 52, folios 169v-170; AGN, Real Hacienda, Volume 54, folios 161v-162.

²⁸ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Comisos, Volume 54, folios 161-161v. This is the only Real Hacienda comiso deposit that resulted from the confiscation of exports and that listed De Larrea as the arresting official.

²⁹ The drop is marked. The AGN's Comisos volumes, for example, contain no cases from San Felipe from the decade after the city's incorporation.

³⁰ See AGN, Real Compañía Guipuzcoana, Volumes 1 through 4.

valley, but the above information would indicate that these effects manifested themselves elsewhere. For San Felipe itself, the provincial government records as well as the monopoly trade company's contraband suppression records show next to nothing for the 1730s.

The company opened one of its trading offices in the city of San Felipe. Perhaps this helps to explain the decline in contraband cases in the area during the company's and city's first decade of existence. A warehouse and exchange office in the city, right on the river, answered one of the recurring complaints of Cocorote residents, particularly Capuchin missionaries, during the 1710s and 1720s, the difficulty and high cost of getting locally-produced cacao to market in Puerto Cabello. The convenience of having a purchaser located literally right next door may have ameliorated the situation or at least provided another option to the arduous journey by land, sea, or both to Puerto Cabello, but it did not solve another, thornier problem—that of price. The Dutch, at the mouths of the Yaracuy or Aroa rivers in San Felipe jurisdiction, at the Punta de Morón in Nirgua, at their trading post in Tucacas, or on Curaçao itself, continued to offer a better price.³¹ And as Eugenio Piñero points out, even the RCG took advantage of the attractive offers made by Dutch traders. RCG ships returning to Spain loaded with cacao and other provincial products often sold some of these to Dutch traders shortly after leaving port in Venezuela.³²

³¹ At an average of 20 pesos per fanega, the Dutch offer was 8 to 12 pesos above the official price of cacao in Venezuela. See Aizpurua, *Curacao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 283-284.

³² Eugenio Piñero, "The Cacao Economy of the Eighteenth-Century Province of Caracas and the Spanish Cacao Market," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 68 (1988), pp. 75-100. Also, as noted by Aizpurua, later in the century the RCG fell into what the French and English *asientos* had done before: they stocked up on goods in Curaçao before calling on Venezuelan ports. Aizpurua, "Comercio exterior," pp. 23-42.

The best way to understand why anti-smuggling disappeared, at least on paper, in the first ten years of San Felipe's life as a city and of RCG trade monopoly, is to locate the main representative of Crown authority—the justice of the peace, responsible for applying official anti-smuggling policy—within local social, economic, and political dynamics. The role of the *teniente de justicia mayor* in local society reflects the shape smuggling and anti-smuggling took. And De Larrea placed himself in the middle of all legal and extra-legal trade in San Felipe that was not managed by the Capuchins. Smuggling through San Felipe did not abruptly stop in 1730; the founding of the city and the RCG did not stop it. It continued, but the extraordinary talents and effort of De Larrea kept it under control.

In eighteenth-century Venezuela, conflict between local elites and justices of the peace were often avoided by having a locally born individual serve as the governor's representative. Don Juan Angel de Larrea was not originally from San Felipe, but his relationship with the city's planter elite was cordial during the decade he served as justice of the peace. De Larrea was an exception to the rule, as was the city of San Felipe. In other parts of the province, such as Valencia or Caracas, the assignment of *peninsulares*, first Canary Islanders and later in the century, Basques, challenged local elites and political institutions. In the Yaracuy River Valley an immigrant from the Basque Country like De Larrea was as equally established as a creole immigrant. Most were migrants originally from somewhere else, from within the province, other parts of the Audiencias of Santo Domingo and New Granada, or from the Iberian Peninsula. De Larrea also put down roots quickly and firmly.³³

³³ Perazzo, *Historia del Estado Yaracuy*, p. 46, has a brief summary of Juan Angel de Larrea's biography. For the De Larrea family of Quito, Ecuador, see Tamar Herzog, "De la autoridad al poder: Quito, los

Originally from Viscaya, he immigrated to Venezuela and married Doña Bárbara de Silva y Coello, a creole born in La Guaira. They settled in Cerritos de Cocorote. De Larrea rapidly became the most prominent and powerful political, military, and economic administrator in the recently created jurisdiction of San Felipe. He never held office outside of the district, confining his activities to posts that operated in and around San Felipe.³⁴ De Larrea recognized the political and geographic extents to which he could extend his influence and authority, and until his death, he tended to stay within the bounds of the possible and effective. His extraordinary efforts were critical in balancing the RCG's drive towards commercial centralization with sanfelipeños' assertion of local autonomy. This delicate equilibrium broke down after his death, as each side pulled in the direction of its own interests.

De Larrea was San Felipe's justice of the peace from May of 1731 until his death in 1739. From 1733 to 1737 he was the agent for the English Real Asiento, and he exercised power of attorney (*apoderado*) for don Samuel Collitt, the company's *factor* in Venezuela. In addition, he was during these same years *juez de indultos de negros de ilícita introducción*, in charge of processing the fines and fees paid by those seeking to legalize the status of their illegally imported human property. In 1738 he took over from don Gabriel Bautista del Campo the direct command of the *patrullas volantes*, patrols

Larrea y la herencia inmaterial, siglos XVI y XVII," in Ronald Escobedo Mansilla, Ana de Zaballa Beascoechea, and Oscar Alvarez Gila, eds., *Emigración y redes sociales de los vascos en América* (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Basque Country, Spain: Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, 1996), pp. 373-383.

³⁴ This contrasts with don Diego de Matos' strategy, discussed in chapter 3 on Caracas. Matos chose to extend his influence as widely as possible, achieving short-term gains but at the cost of long-term animosity. De Larrea concentrated his efforts on consolidating a local power base, one that produced fruits slowly but steadily over the long term.

composed of Crown soldiers assigned to inspect the beaches from Morón to Tucacas. He held this post until his death at the end of 1739, at which time it returned to Del Campo.

The Real Asiento factor divided his time between the provincial capital of Caracas and its port, La Guaira. Legally imported slaves were to arrive at La Guaira before being distributed to their final destinations around the province. The coast immediately surrounding La Guaira continued to be a major cacao producing area, and as such continued to require imported labor, but cacao production was expanding to new areas, many of them far from the province's official ports of La Guaira and Puerto Cabello. Many plantation owners and managers along the cacao frontiers of Barlovento, the Tuy valleys, and San Felipe, as well as residents of the Segovia Highlands and the Llanos who also demanded captive labor, failed to see the benefit of buying their slaves from the English Asiento, especially when the asiento purchased on Curaçao many of the people it marketed in Venezuela. Many preferred to buy from Dutch traders who cruised the coast, usually off Coro, or they went directly to Curaçao, thereby cutting out the middlemen, official and unofficial.

De Larrea was responsible for bringing into good legal standing human property that had been imported to San Felipe and neighboring settlements outside the norms required by the asiento contract. He collected adjustments, or *indultos*, from those slave owners caught smuggling, or from those who, for various reasons, preferred to bring their slaves into legal standing. The *indulto* paid was the equivalent of the taxes paid to the Real Asiento for each *pieza de Indias* and *cabeza de esclavo* imported. Payment was usually made in kind, most often cacao but also tobacco. De Larrea was in charge of

collecting payments and delivering them to the asiento's nearest office in Puerto Cabello. To do this, he had his own mule train.³⁵

In San Lorenzo, on October 22, 1734, the Crown approved the request submitted by both the RCG and the governor of Venezuela for permission to form permanent shore and beach patrols to guard against smuggling in the area west of Puerto Cabello and east of Coro. The Crown instructed that the patrol should consist of seventy to one-hundred men all originally from the province ("naturales de la provincia"), should be led by a captain appointed by the governor, and that the captain and his men should receive a salary so that they would not depend on confiscations for their livelihood. The Crown added that their salaries should, if possible, depend as little as possible on the monies collected by the Real Hacienda.³⁶

Lardizábal had already ordered the patrol formed before receiving royal approval and instruction. In May of the same year he had placed don Juan Angel de Larrea, *teniente de justicia mayor* of San Felipe, in charge of creating the first *patrulla volante* for the area, to consist of twenty-five men—not the seventy to one-hundred that the Crown envisioned—under one *cabo*. The commandant general set the company's salaries at twelve pesos per month for each soldier and twenty pesos for the *cabo*. To De Larrea he assigned the tasks of naming the patrol's members, constructing the fort in Tucacas from which it would operate, and assuring the soldiers had adequate housing and three or four

³⁵ "Información hecha a pedimento de don Juan Angel de Larrea, apoderado de don Samuel Collitt, factor del Real Asiento de Inglaterra, en Puerto Cabello, sobre unos zurroneos de cacao que los holandeses quitaron en la boca del Río Yracuy, pertenecientes a dicho Real Asiento," April 11, 1731, AGN, Gobernación y Capitanía General, Volume 2, Expediente 6, folios 128-141v, especially 133-133v, 139v.

³⁶ The Crown to Commandant General Lardizábal, San Lorenzo, October 22, 1734, in "Auto que sigue don Martín Pérez de Castro sobre haberle maltratado de obras y palabras don Gabriel Bautista del Campo, vecino de la ciudad de San Felipe," October 1, 1749, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 2-588-1, folios 73-90.

small cannons (*cañonsillos*).³⁷ De Larrea gave command of the patrols to his good friend Gabriel Bautista del Campo, delegating to him the task of eliminating the Dutch trading post at Tucacas and constructing in its place a Spanish military outpost.

Three months later the governor implemented a tax of one peso per load for goods transported from San Felipe to Puerto Cabello, the money collected to cover the patrol's payroll and any other expenses.³⁸ This policy was to go in effect on October 15, 1734, and stay in place for four years from that date.

Under Commander General Lardizábal, not only did De Larrea oversee the counter-contraband patrols on the province's west coast, he also acted as intermediary between justices of the peace assigned to other districts, the governor, and RCG authorities. He enjoyed Lardizábal's confidence. The commander general turned to him consistently to intervene in contraband cases that crossed jurisdictional boundaries or represented serious threats to colonial and RCG authority.³⁹ Three examples, all from Carora, attest to this. Lardizábal sent De Larrea three times, in August 1735, November 1735, and April 1736 to intervene in conflicts between the local cabildo and the justice of the peace.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid., May 7, 1734, folios 77v-83.

³⁸ Ibid., Commandant General Lardizábal to don Juan Angel de Larrea, Caracas, August 7, 1734, folios 83-89. His order did not indicate if the tax was on all loads traveling to Puerto Cabello or on specific products. By late 1739, the tax was on loads of cacao.

³⁹ These same powers were given to Ignacio de Basazábal when Governor Zuloaga named him justice of the peace for San Felipe. Some historians have presented this as another sticking point for the *sanfelipeño* cabildo members, who, according to this reasoning, were concerned about the new Basque officer exercising too much authority over too much territory. Nonetheless, the cross-jurisdictional responsibility of the San Felipe *teniente* was not new, and the San Felipe municipal elite did not seem to have been bothered by De Larrea's exercise of it.

⁴⁰ "Autos sobre tumulto acaecido en la ciudad de Carora en la aprehensión de un comiso y resistencia del Alcalde de la Hermandad contra el ayudante del teniente de dicha ciudad," AGN, Comisos, Volume 15, Expediente 4, folios 111-124; "Autos criminales seguidos de oficio contra don Francisco Alvarado, don Tomás de Alvarado, don Felipe Alvarado, don Diego Alvarado, don Antonio de Campos, Gabriel Oleta, Dionisio Negre, Pedro Leal, Francisco Osorio, Teodoro Calimán, Melchor Pedro Maestre, Juan García, Joseph Montero, George Alegre y Blas Arias, sobre comercio ilícito," AGN, Comisos, Volume 17,

De Larrea's plenipotentiary services were not limited to Carora. In March 1739 Governor Zuloaga ordered him to travel south to Nirgua to collect 200 pesos in fines imposed on various members of the Nirgua cabildo.⁴¹

De Larrea's authority had its limits, and he for the most part honored them. He exercised wide discretion within the San Felipe jurisdiction since he enjoyed the confidence of the governor's office in Caracas and the support of local cacao growers in San Felipe. He successfully completed each of the transjurisdictional tasks assigned to him by Lardizábal, and with minimal resistance to his authority. He faced stiffer resistance and even rebuke when he pushed or overstepped the bounds of his effective sphere of influence. Later I will discuss an incident in which he overstepped the bounds within San Felipe and was rebuked for it. Here, an example of his efforts to extend his authority will help to define its limits and delineate other power system at work in the region.

On November 19, 1737, four Dutch sloops raided a warehouse at the mouth of the Aroa River and then tried and failed to take the small Spanish fort at Tucacas.⁴² They took the tobacco and cacao stored at the warehouse and left nothing in return. Over a year before, on February 1, 1736, Captain General Lardizábal had instructed all cabos in the Tucacas area to help out in the case of a Dutch attack on one of the military or storage

Expediente 14, folios 286-297v; "Causa criminal contra los Alcaldes Ordinarios y vecinos de Carora por la muerte de don Buenaventura y otros cinco hombres que trabajaban con él en la vigilancia de comercio para entrar el contrabando. Autos sobre la muerte de Buenaventura Hernández Pavón, 1736," AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-177-1, folios 1-363.

⁴¹ AGN, Real Hacienda, Libro Común y General de Caracas, Penas de Cámara, Volume 47, folios 155-155v. The entry does not specify the cabildo members' transgressions.

⁴² "Causa fulminada contra don Juan Manuel Montero, cabo a guerra del pueblo de Mapubares sobre no haber acudido al saqueo que hicieron los holandeses del almacén en la boca del Río de Aroa," November 20, 1737, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-204-6, folios 1-51v.

positions along the Golfo Triste. Three Dutch sloops had attacked Tucacas the day after Christmas in 1735, and the captain general was incensed that some local cabos had failed to come to the fort's aid. Lardizábal included a severe penalty for those who failed to report: the loss of half of their possessions and six years of exile in North Africa.

Don Juan Manuel Montero, the *cabo a guerra* of the town of Río Tocuyo and the mission town of Mapubares, both just west of the Aroa River in the Coro jurisdiction, failed to report during the 1737 raid. This was the accusation leveled by De Larrea against him.

Two months after the Dutch raid De Larrea opened criminal investigations against Montero for his failure to give aid at Aroa or Tucacas. Witnesses for the prosecution who had served at the Tucacas fort claimed three cannon shots were fired to summon the cabos of the neighboring settlements of Mapubares, Río Tocuyo, and San Nicolás. The cabo from San Nicolás, in San Felipe jurisdiction, reported, but Montero, who served both Río Tocuyo and Mapubares, did not.

Montero, when summoned to Caracas to give account of his actions before Governor Zuloaga, defended himself effectively. His wife also directed a successful defense when Zuloaga sent don Tomás Rodríguez Correa to Mapubares to investigate De Larrea's charges. They convinced Governor Zuloaga and his legal advisor, don Diego López de Varelo, the Lieutenant Governor and Inspector General, that De Larrea's charges were unfounded, motivated by personal animosity and political ambition. The witnesses they presented seriously undermined the claim that Montero received the call to Tucacas and declined to respond. According to them, Montero never heard the summons or received written confirmation of it later. Eight leagues separated Mapubares from the

Aroa River, with a hill, today's Cerro Misión, in between. The written confirmation, signed by De Larrea, reached Juan Francisco Montero, Juan Manuel Montero's cabo in Río Tocuyo, who never passed it on to his captain.⁴³ A messenger sent by De Larrea finally reached Montero four days after the raid.

Montero and Sánchez also swayed the governor to conclude that De Larrea opened the case against Montero with ulterior motives. Juan Francisco, the Río Tocuyo cabo, and Joseph Isidro Bocanegra, a soldier at the Tucacas fort and witness for De Larrea, who had previously served under Juan Manuel Montero, were Juan Manuel's "enemies." Bocanegra held a grudge against him since Montero caught him stealing from a lot of confiscated contraband. Montero and his witnesses claimed ignorance as to why the other Montero despised him. De Larrea recruited both in his attempt to punish Montero or at least undermine his credibility enough to force his removal from his command in Río Tocuyo and Mapubares.

De Larrea was able to insert himself into a political rift in Río Tocuyo, but he lacked the political clout and backing to bring off his power move. Juan Manuel Montero served in a mission town in Coro outside of De Larrea's consolidated sphere of influence. Juan Manuel's brother was the priest in the town of Mapubares. De Larrea needed cross-jurisdictional backing in order to pull off his maneuver, for not only was Montero and the town he served clearly outside of San Felipe, but the mission status of the pueblo removed its civilian law enforcement agents from direct subordination to De Larrea. The *teniente de justicia mayor* needed strong support from the governor, and by 1738, his patron for so many years, Lardizábal, was gone. Governor Zuloaga did not afford the

⁴³ The two Monteros were not related, or so Juan Manuel claimed.

teniente the same wide discretion as his predecessor, as witnessed by De Larrea's failed moves against Montero.⁴⁴

The Mission Network: The Capuchins of the Yaracuy River Valley

In the limited work that has been done on smuggling in colonial Venezuela and its neighboring provinces, the role of the Church and the clergy in extra-legal commercial endeavors has received minimal attention, including at best brief anecdotes or repetition of centuries-old gossip about clergy members' involvement in various types and phases of contraband. Besides the general point that priests did it too, there has been little analysis of the place or extent of the clergy's involvement. Here I aim to analyze how the Capuchins of the Yaracuy River Valley integrated smuggling into their mission system.

One finds numerous examples of priests' involvement in smuggling in the historiography of Spanish American smuggling.⁴⁵ Feliciano Ramos provides a brief litany of accusations leveled against clergy in Panama, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela, without reaching a definitive conclusion on priests' participation in smuggling.⁴⁶ Grahn, in his study of smuggling in three coastal regions in early eighteenth-century New Granada, concentrates some of his discussion on the chronic conflict between the bishop seated in Santa Marta and the governors of the province of Santa Marta.⁴⁷ According to Grahn, Bishop Antonio de Monroy y Meneses confronted one governor after another

⁴⁴ See also the Rivas case, discussed below, in which De Larrea tried and failed to have two clergymen prosecuted on smuggling charges. De Larrea claimed that Rivas and the priest of San Felipe, don Pedro Silvestre Rodríguez Galeas, attempted to sell cacao to the Dutch from Rodríguez Galeas' estate in San Nicolás.

⁴⁵ This study is no different. See the previous chapters on Nirgua, Caracas, and Valencia for further examples.

⁴⁶ Héctor R. Feliciano Ramos, *El contrabando inglés en el Caribe y el Golfo de México* (Seville: Publicaciones de la Excm. Diputación Provincial de Sevilla, 1990), pp. 119-121.

⁴⁷ Grahn, *The Political Economy of Smuggling*, pp. 82-83.

during the 1720s and 1730s, in an intense, elite-level rivalry over control of the local clandestine trade. The bishop went so far as to excommunicate Governor Juan Beltrán de Caicedo (governor of Santa Marta from 1718 to 1726). This was in response to the governor's expulsion of the Capuchin friars from the mission of Chimila in southern Santa Marta province. The governor had, not surprisingly, accused them of using the mission as a cover for contraband trade.⁴⁸

Smuggling under the guise of missionary activity was not the governors' only cause for concern. During the War of Spanish Succession, the Count of Antería, don Bartolomé de Capocelato, was sent to Curaçao as special envoy to the colonial subjects of Venezuela. His mission was to sway them to side with Archduke Charles of Austria in the struggle for the Spanish throne. According to Analola Borges, members of the clergy in Venezuela, especially those who shuttled back and forth between Tierra Firme and Curaçao, played a crucial role in spreading the Count's message—in pamphlets and letters—along the Caracas coast. She gives special mention to the role played by Capuchin friars, although she notes that a few Augustinians and Jesuits were also involved.⁴⁹

Clergymen and missionaries were accused of traveling repeatedly to Curaçao with the intent to engage in extra-legal commercial activities. Though the accusation may well

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

⁴⁹ Borges, *La casa de Austria en Venezuela*, p. 63. In 1704, the Jesuit father Miguel Alejo Schabel traveled from Curaçao to Barinas, stopping along the way in Barquisimeto, Araure, Guanare, and Tucupito. Ibid., pp. 78–79. Schabel's agent in Venezuela was Standard-Bearer Diego Carlos de Riberas, from Mérida, who bought tobacco in Araure and transported it to the Yaracuy coast. Here Schabel and the Dutch captain Juan de Nassón waited to purchase the tobacco. See "Averiguación por Sargento Mayor Andrés Gutiérrez de Rojas, Alcalde Ordinario de Barquisimeto, sobre personas sin licencia del Real Consejo o de la Casa de Contratación que vienen acá, españoles y extranjeros," Cerritos de Cocorote, February 18, 1705, AGN, Comisos, Volume 1, Expediente 7, folios 197–209, especially Schabel's letter to Riberas, written in Curaçao on February 16, 1705, folios 201–201v.

have been well founded, priests living in or passing through the Province of Venezuela had good reason to go the Dutch island. The Dutch West Indies Company took Curaçao from the Spanish in 1634.⁵⁰ In 1648, with the Treaty of Westphalia, the peace reached by Spain and the United Provinces included the former's formal recognition of the latter's control over the island. Nonetheless, the Catholic Church on Curaçao remained under the direction of the Bishop of Caracas. The West Indies Company acquiesced to this, as it did to the evangelization to the island's African slaves and growing population of free blacks and creole mulattoes. As the clergy on the island took orders from Caracas, the bishop there considered it his prerogative to name the priests that would serve there. Hence many of the Catholic clergymen who made the trip to Willemstad went there on assignment.⁵¹

The continued presence of the Catholic Church on the island, the conversion of most slaves and free colored to Catholicism, the reinforcement of Spanish as the dominant language on the island through evangelization in that language, the frequent assignment of priests who had served along the Caracas coast to service on Curaçao, all these elements of the Church's continued presence and activity on Curaçao facilitated the interchange between Curaçao and Venezuela, especially the shores of the Golfo Triste.

Capuchin missionaries' participation in extra-legal trade went beyond the actions of individual clergymen who took advantage of their positions. The Capuchins used mission institutions and legal privileges to make trading with the Dutch an integral part of their mission network. In the early eighteenth century, they founded three missions in an

⁵⁰ More precisely, from the encomendero Juan de Ampies. The Crown had granted the island in encomienda to him.

⁵¹ Klooster, "Subordinate but Proud," pp. 291-293; Felice Cardot, *Curacao hispánico*, pp. 389-413.

area where the local Indian population had been decimated, relocated, or integrated into the local creole populace. Unlike missions elsewhere, the Capuchin missions of Yaracuy were coveted not for their captive labor but because of their lands, the cacao they produced, and the means by which the missionaries moved it to market.

In 1700 the Capuchin friars serving in the Province of Venezuela held a general congress, a *capítulo*, to discuss mission objectives and strategies. Two actions taken during this meeting are of interest here. First, Friar Marcelino de San Vicente, who had arrived in Venezuela from Spain the previous year, was elected prefect of the province's Capuchin missions, a position he held on and off until his death in the 1750s. Second, the friars decided to expand the mission system's economic activities, voting to establish cacao plantations. The friars wanted to take advantage of the expanding cacao export economy and international demand for the fruit. The money earned from the sales would be used, the friars hoped, to buy breeding mares (*vegas de vientre*), which would be used in turn to begin developing stocks of mules. Some would be used within the mission system; others would be sold to *arrieros*. All these properties would be held in the fathers' names, so that the mission Indians, too naive in the ways of property and commerce, would not, the friars argued, be duped out of their property.⁵² The new

⁵² From Carrocera, *Misión de los capuchinos*: Volume II, Document 135, "Cuestiones propuestas al Capítulo de 1700, por el que fue elegido Prefecto P. Marcelino de San Vicente, suscritas por los demás misioneros de los Llanos," 1700, pp. 1-3. The friars determined that "será el determinar en el Capítulo que todos los Padres presidentes soliciten y pongan todo el cuidado posible, después de lo espiritual, en que se planten algunas haciendas de cacao, donde hubiera comodidad, o que se hagan grandes conucos de maíz." The Crown, informed of this decision by the Capuchins, approved and instructed the governor of Venezuela, at the time, don Nicolás Eugenio Ponte y Hoyo, to insure the friars had no trouble in this endeavour. See *Ibid.*, Volume II, Document 150, "Cédula al gobernador de Venezuela por la que se autorizan en los pueblos misionales haciendas de cacao y conucos de maíz pero quedando la propiedad a los indios, aunque debían ser administradas por los misioneros capuchinos," August 5, 1702, pp. 31-32. The Capuchins seem to have successfully ignored the second provision in the real cédula, that ownership of the cacao plantations and their products be retained by the neophytes.

missions would also provide both a protected market and an export center for the beef and hides produced on the llanos missions.⁵³

According to Borges, the coastal missions were established to counter the "heretical propaganda" that Dutch traders imparted to the local blacks and Indians that interacted with them.⁵⁴ In actuality, there was little cause for such concern. On the Dutch side, most of the captains and supercargoes were Sephardic Jews with no interest in converting anyone, either on Curaçao or along the Caracas coast. The crews on the Dutch trading vessels were mostly free and enslaved blacks and mulattoes, who, if they had received any religious teachings, were most likely to have been preached to by Catholic priests and friars, many of whom had come over from Tierra Firme.⁵⁵ On the Venezuelan side, the missions did not serve Africans or anyone of African descent. Nor did the missions founded along the Golfo Triste serve a local Indian population. The Capuchin friars imported Indians from the Llanos once the missions were established.

San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras was founded in 1709. The mission of La Purísima Concepción de Tinajas was founded in 1714 but lasted eight years.⁵⁶ Nuestra Señora del Carmen, between San Francisco Javier and Tinajas, was founded around the same time. Friar Marcelino de San Vicente, with the assistance of Father Pedro de

⁵³ The Capuchins were looking for an outlet for their products as early as 1689. That year the friars sought and secured approval from the king to sell their cattle in the valleys of Ocumare, San Esteban, Aragua, and Barquisimeto. AGN, Reales Cédulas, Segunda Sección, Volume 2, RC #92, Madrid, September 22, 1689, fol. 165.

⁵⁴ Borges, *La casa de Austria en Venezuela*, p. 60. This comes as part of an argument about the central yet informal role Curaçao played in the development of the province. She writes, "El comercio, el intercambio, la economía, la milicia y la política, gira en torno a Curazao; hasta la Iglesia extendió sus pueblos de misión por las costas para contrapesar la propaganda herética entre los negros e indios que frecuentaban el trato con los holandeses."

⁵⁵ See Klooster, "Subordinate but Proud."

⁵⁶ Padre Buenaventura de Carrocera, "Introducción," in his *Misión de los capuchinos*, p. xxi.

Alcalá, founded San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras twenty-two leagues from Barquisimeto. The two Capuchin friars populated the new mission with 216 Indians, whom they had rounded up, with the help of an "escort" of 160 men, over the course of two and a half months in the Llanos and along the Guanare, Boconó, Portuguesa, and Masparro Rivers.⁵⁷ One of the advantages of the mission's location was the difficulty the neophytes faced in escaping and returning to their places of origin.⁵⁸

The rise of San Felipe's cacao export economic cannot be separated from the development of the area's Capuchin missions and the efforts of one friar in particular, Marcelino de San Vicente.

In the investigation carried out by the governor of Venezuela to determine which colonial subjects and officials sympathized with or participated in the war-time intrigues of the Count of Antería, Capuchin friars stood out among clergymen accused, and Friar Marcelino de San Vicente, at the time Procurador of the Venezuelan missions, stood out

⁵⁷ Carrocera, *Misión de los capuchinos*, Volume I, p. 111.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Arcila Fariás summarizes the *entradas* done by Capuchin missionaries into the llanos and the Orinoco Basin, many of them led by Friar Marcelino de San Vicente. See Eduardo Arcila Fariás, "El régimen de la propiedad territorial en Hispanoamérica," in Eduardo Arcila Fariás et al., *La Obra Pía de Chuao*, pp. 10-49, especially pp. 29-36. Odd though they may seem to have been, the Capuchin missions of San Francisco Javier de Aguas Culebras, the smaller Nuestra Señora del Carmen, and the sometimes occupied, sometimes abandoned Nuestra Señora de la Caridad de las Tinajas were not the only examples of missions located far from the Indian population served and established to relocate unruly individuals, families, or groups. The Capuchins also administered the Indian pueblo of Maiquetía, just west of the port of La Guaira, as well as the mission of Charallave, in the upper reaches of the Tuy River Valley, where cacao production was expanding in the early eighteenth century. Though Charallave was not at the center of the Tuy River valley's cacao producing area, it did enjoy a privileged position for easy access to not only the Tuy valleys, but also to the capital of Caracas and the Aragua valleys immediately to the west. The Capuchin order had established these as well as the Yaracuy Valley missions at the beginning of the eighteenth century as relocation centers for troublemakers removed from the Capuchins' main area of work, the llanos. These coastal missions received plains Indians who had repeatedly either run away or rejected the Christian faith others on the missions embraced. It is striking that the Capuchins chose to populate their small, coastal missions with populations of runaways and troublemakers, considering the easy access to trouble the location of these missions provided. On the Tuy River valleys, see Robert J. Ferry, "La esclavitud, el contrabando y los Tenientes de Justicia: Control del interior de Caracas en el siglo XVIII," in *Congreso Bicentenario de Simón Bolívar*, Volume II (Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1985), pp. 97-142.

among them.⁵⁹ In his June 17, 1712, correspondence with the king, Governor Juan Francisco de Cañas accused Friar Marcelino and fellow Capuchin friar Angel Mataró of fraternizing with the Curaçaoan trader Jorge Cristiano in their missions in Tucacas.⁶⁰ The governor claimed that Friar Marcelino and Mataró, among others, instead of teaching the local population to avoid foreigners, encouraged the “blacks, Indians, and mestizos, ignorant people blindly loyal to the mission priests,” to have friendly relations with Cristiano and other Dutch traders. He also accused the same two friars of having read, in a *pulpero's* house, some seditious fliers, or *pasquines*, against the governor and other provincial officials.⁶¹

Mission and civil records indicate the Capuchin missions operated a large and successful fleet of canoes, manned by mission Indians, pardo mission employees, and pardo canoe operators loosely associated with the missions or with particular friars. The municipal officials of Barquisimeto, in their accusations of smuggling against Cocorote residents and in their justification of their attacks against them, identified some of the major components of the missionaries' river transport operation. They had reported to the king that during their 1724 raid the alcaldes found at the mouth of the Yaracuy River “diferentes canoas con algunas mercaderías y dos hombres con cartas escritas en cifras, que dijeron ser de un judío llamado Elías de la Torre, vecino de Tucacas, dirigidas a personas habitantes en dicho cerro de Cocorote.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Borges *La casa de Austria en Venezuela*, p. 95.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, fn 28, p. 95.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Carrocera, *Misión de los capuchinos*, Document 195, “Cédula al gobernador de Venezuela ordenándole informe sobre los autos hechos en orden a la fundación de dos pueblos de españoles en Buría y Cerritos de Cocorote por los misioneros capuchinos, y también sobre el derribo de casas de los indios en los Cerritos,

For the Barquisimeto alcaldes, the Capuchins had founded their coastal missions largely to take advantage of the region's privileged position for access to Dutch traders sailing out of Curaçao or operating from Tucacas. The friars had settled the missions with Indians from the Llanos to take advantage of their skills in making and manipulating canoes. Once the missions were established, the vessels built, and the river sufficiently altered to allow for canoe travel, the friars opened river transport operation, in which they delivered not just their own products, but also those of others from the province of Venezuela and beyond.⁶³

By 1724 the Capuchin missions had fleets of canoes that they used to transport their cacao, the cacao from neighboring plantations, and goods from outside the region. The Indians who sailed the canoes charged neighbors and traders from distant parts of the province freightage, which could be paid in specie or in kind, the latter usually being textiles received from Dutch traders.⁶⁴ It is hard to assess, at least from the criminal proceedings and royal correspondence consulted, exactly how many canoes the missions

ordenado por el alcalde de Barquisimeto," *El Pardo*, January 1, 1727, pp. 169-171. The quote is from p. 170.

⁶³ Beyond in this instance probably means south and west of the province of Venezuela, namely the llanos and the tobacco-producing province of Barinas in the Viceroyalty of New Granada. *Ibid.*, Document 190, "La ciudad de Nueva Segovia de Barquisimeto presenta al rey memorial para justificar lo ejecutado por uno de sus alcaldes al destruir las casas de los indios de los Cerritos de Cocorote y pidiendo se tengan en cuenta sus derechos y que se reprima el comercio ilícito ejercido por los indios del valle de Yaracuy, oyendo además sus alegatos respecto a la petición formulada por los misioneros capuchinos para fundar dos nuevos pueblos de españoles: uno en los mencionados Cerritos y uno en la Sabana de Buría," 1726, p. 156-160. According to the Barquisimeto alcaldes' version of Cocorote's founding, "se agregasen y fundasen a modo de población de bohíos los indios guamos, los que, patrocinados de gente de la tierra adentro, así vagabundos como comerciantes, habían por aquella parte aumentado el ilícito comercio, por haber éstos dado comunicación al río Yaracuy con el mar," p. 157.

⁶⁴ Again from *Ibid.*, Document 190, "La ciudad de Nueva Segovia de Barquisimeto," p. 157: "y con la disposición que tienen de canoas, que, como diestros en su contrucción, fabrican, comercian con los holandeses no sólo los frutos que ellos cultivan sino es asimismo [sic] los que les conducen de aquella provincia y de fuera de ella otros particulares por el flete que les pagan de su navegación y conducción a los navíos y retorno de los géneros y ropas que reciben en pago."

had at their disposal.⁶⁵ Don Simón López Barahona, the Barquisimeto alcalde who led the November 1724 raid on Cerritos de Cocorote, claimed to have found and destroyed twenty-seven canoes on the Yaracuy River. He claimed he knew they all were used by mission Indians, though he could not determine exact ownership.⁶⁶

In most instances such a depiction would be suspect. It was common for those officially assigned the task of suppressing smuggling to present their adversaries as more numerous, better armed, more extensive, and more vertically organized than they actually were. This tendency for those involved in law enforcement to see and make organized crime where it did not exist was pervasive, extending from the Crown to the provincial governors, all the way down to the cabos assigned by tenientes de justicia mayor to patrol particular valleys or strips of coastline.⁶⁷ Most common in field reports submitted to superior officers, this argument usually served to explain the reporting authority's inability to carry out his assignment or to cover up his disinclination to do so. The Barquisimeto alcaldes waged a lengthy, unsuccessful campaign against the residents of Cerritos de Cocorote, one they lost resoundingly when the Crown decided that the Yaracuy River valley's agricultural export boom was more boon, as the Capuchin friars had argued in their requests for a city in the area, than bane, as the Barquisimeto authorities had argued in depicting Cerritos de Cocorote as a smugglers' haven. One consistent element in their campaign against Cocorote was their depiction of the Capuchins' smuggler network. They claimed the Capuchins used their missions along

⁶⁵ One would have to consult the records of the San Felipe missions.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Document 190, pp. 158-159.

⁶⁷ See Peter Reuter, *Disorganized Crime: The Economics of the Visible Hand* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), for a similar argument for contemporary U.S. cities.

and near the Yaracuy River as productive and coordinating centers for smuggling cacao and other agricultural products to Dutch traders at the mouth of the river and along the coast. They had connections with traders from all over the province, as well as the Llanos, and these individuals turned to the Capuchins of Cocorote when they needed to get their goods to informal markets. The missions, then, were fronts according to their opponents. They served as logistical centers in an extensive network that extended everywhere the Capuchins had missions: across the province's llanos, throughout the Segovia Highlands, and, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, out into the Golfo Triste.

The founder and long-time president of the mission of San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras confirmed much of what the *alcaldes* claimed. In his 1720 justification of mission involvement in trade with the Dutch on Curaçao, Friar Marcelino described the ways in which the missions' canoes were used and corroborated some of the *alcaldes'* assertions.⁶⁸ Everything had to be imported into the valley, given the extensive and exclusive cultivation of cacao. Friar Marcelino noted that since no cotton could be picked in the area, nor cattle raised, everything for clothing, storage (hides), and the missions' principal source of protein—beef, probably dried—had to be brought in from elsewhere, purchased with either silver specie or cacao. Importing finished goods and perishables from major ports and emporiums like Caracas and Puerto Cabello was so expensive, the friar argued, that the missions did not make any money trading with these centers. He added that in order to make ends meet, the friars rented canoes and charged *fletes* to take goods down to the mouth of the Yaracuy. Payment was in kind, usually in

⁶⁸ "Cuestión en que se pregunta si sería lícito a los misioneros capuchinos de esta Provincia de Caracas usar de medio prohibidos," AGN, Comisos, Volume 12, Expediente 7, folios 167v-169v.

textiles. Friar Marcelino refused to recognize that the Capuchins, by providing this service, facilitated exchange with the Dutch. What other people did with the cacao and tobacco that the mission canoes transported to the coast was none of their business. That, noted Friar Marcelino, was the jurisdiction of the king.

Comisos records from confiscations carried out by Barquisimeto authorities provide further evidence of the missions' canoe-transport system. Most^{of} the cacao captured in the big comisos done on the Yaracuy belonged to vecinos of valleys of Barquisimeto using the Capuchins' canoes. The comiso done on the Yaracuy River late in 1721, the one that elicited Friar Marcelino de San Vicente's extended defense of mission smuggling, was inventoried by Governor Alvarez de Abreu on September 10, 1721. He did this, he claimed, after he had consulted San Francisco Javier mission president Friar Miguel de Olivares on the ownership of the items impounded. The governor's list is as follows: Of 13 canoes, 7 belonged to Mission San Francisco Javier and 6 belonged to Friar Francisco de Campino. The canoes were carrying 332 bags (zurrone) of cacao, 52 of which belonged to Olivares, 20 to Campino, and the rest belonged to various residents of the valleys of Barquisimeto.⁶⁹

The missions' trading activities did not stop at the Yaracuy River. The mission Indians and hired hands sent by the friars to ply the river also transported goods along the coast to market. The mission or individual friars also owned mules. In November of 1730, an informant notified Sergeant don Joseph Garcés de Medina, comisario serving under RCG director Olavarriaga, that a considerable shipment of cacao and tobacco was

⁶⁹ Auto de Gobernador Alvarez de Abreu, Valencia, September 10, 1721, included in "Autos sobre decomiso de cantidad de fanegas de cacao en los puertos de Tucacas y Cuare," AGN, Comisos, Volume 12, Expediente 7, folio 170.

on its way to Tucacas and Cuare—there were supposedly up to 150 loads of cacao.⁷⁰

Garcés sent out Captain Pedro Martín Arias and twenty men to inspect the area, and they reported back that they had captured at the port of Cuare 24 mules, the mare that led them (“la madrina de las mulas”), 16 wide saddles with tackle, 24 bags of cacao, 8 baskets of tobacco, 1 short barreled musket, and 2 pairs of pistols. In addition, they found a canoe loaded with bread and cooked meat (“carne cocida”), but these perishables were not included in the inventory of confiscated goods. The cacao and tobacco were to be traded for 12 loads of textiles, which, along with the people involved in the exchange, inexplicably slipped away from the captain and his patrol.⁷¹

The traders, both Venezuelan and Dutch, fled from the patrol, but shortly thereafter, a Capuchin friar approached them.⁷² First he tried to have Garcés give the confiscated goods to him, promising money in return. The *comisionario* refused, and the friar grew angry, according to Garcés, making a scandal, saying that the goods belonged to the mission and that the missionaries in Venezuela could trade their products with whomever they saw fit.⁷³ Garcés was so taken aback by the friar’s unabashed insistence on trading with the Dutch that he halted his investigation, sent to Olavarriaga what he had collected so far, and waited for further instructions from the company director.

⁷⁰ One carga of cacao was about 2 fanegas. If the Dutch were paying between 12 and 20 pesos per fanega, not uncommon along this part of the Caracas coast during these years, then the mule train carried from 3600 to 6000 pesos in cacao.

⁷¹ “Autos sobre decomiso de cantidad de fanegas de cacao,” folios 154-161.

⁷² Neither Garcés in his testimony before Arias nor Arias in his correspondence with Olavarriaga identified the friar.

⁷³ “Autos sobre decomiso de cantidad de fanegas de cacao,” folio 161. According to Garcés, the friar told them the missionaries had “entera facultad . . . que andar por estas Provincias por tratar con cualesquiera naciones del despendio de sus frutos.”

The unnamed friar's argument was consistent with Capuchin theory and practice since the founding of San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras at the beginning of the century. The friars at the mission frequently presented to civil administrative officials, including the king, justifications for their dealings with the Dutch, and the recurring capture of canoes, mules, cacao, tobacco, and individuals owned by or associated with the Yaracuy Valley missions attest to a tenacious commitment to the practice they defended. Friar Marcelino de San Vicente, founder and longtime president of Mission San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras, was the most outspoken on this issue, and he was not alone. For example, in 1722 Friar Salvador de Cádiz, at the time Prefect of Capuchin missions in Venezuela, presented the argument to the king in a general report on the state of the province's missions.⁷⁴ He requested the Crown repeal the ban on traffic along the Yaracuy River, explaining that this was the quickest and easiest route for the missionaries to get their goods to market at Puerto Cabello. Noting the difficulty of trading through Crown-sanctioned channels, he added that if the Yaracuy missions were unable to acquire necessary supplies through legal means, they would be forced to seek them, just the most basic necessities of course, through other channels.⁷⁵ This should not, continued the prefect, come as a surprise to the Crown, given that other regular clergy engaged in similar extra-legal activity. He cited the example of the Jesuit missionaries on the Zulia and Catatumbo Rivers, in the Pamplona jurisdiction of the Province of

⁷⁴ "El Prefecto Padre José Francisco de Cádiz informa al rey del estado de la misión, pueblos fundados, misioneros actuales y dificultades surgidas, haciendo luego varias peticiones en bien de los indios y de su bienestar material así como para el mayor progreso de las reducciones." *Misión de Nuestra Señora del Carmen*, June 20, 1722. Carrocera, *Misión de los capuchinos*, Volume II, Document 179, pp. 83-93.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86. Cádiz writes, "mientras no se consigue este comercio lícito, pudiésemos sólo para las misiones proveernos de lo necesario para los indios, respecto que la manutención de los dichos indios no admite espera, fuera de grande alivio para las misiones, aunque para los demás no se permita, hasta que, habiendo el lícito, no sea necesario, porque no tenemos medios posibles por otro modo alguno."

Maracaibo, who insisted on the validity of obtaining wax, wine, and iron tools by whatever means necessary or available to them.⁷⁶

Friar Marcelino de San Vicente had developed this argument more extensively in an exchange with Governor Antonio José Alvarez de Abreu in 1720 and 1721. The correspondence was triggered, not surprisingly, by civilian authorities' confiscation of cacao and tobacco that mission canoes and porters had carried down the Yaracuy River, with the purpose of trading with the Dutch, according to the arresting official.⁷⁷ Friar Marcelino, on August 1, 1720, put the argument on paper, entitling his treatise "Cuestión en que se pregunta si sería lícito a los misioneros capuchinos de esta Provincia de Caracas usar de medios prohibidos por ley humana para la conversión y manutención de los Indios cuando para estos fines no alcanzan los medios que no están prohibidos."⁷⁸ Written in the form of a proof, the "Cuestión" first put forth six suppositions. These were:

1. That Indians in Venezuela lived in low-lying, swampy areas ("tierras bajas y senegosas") unsuitable for mission settlements
2. That the Indians were barbaric, animalistic, and needed to be subdued by force

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 87. This information about the Maracaibo Jesuit missionaries was passed on to Cádiz by don Clemente de Arauz, at the time corregidor in the Barquisimeto valleys. He had previously served as corregidor in Pamplona. One finds similar arguments in faraway places. The following comes from Upper California in the early nineteenth century. In 1819, the Franciscan Father Argüello wrote the Viceroy in Mexico: "The padres are concerned in illicit trade from a grave and general necessity of clothing and other materials which they have experienced in the past, and experience more and more from day to day in jurisdiction of this government. A rule of canonical law says: *Hace lícito la necesidad lo que no es lícito por la ley.*" Argüello to Calleja, November 12, 1819. In Magdalen Coughlin, "Boston Smugglers on the Coast (1797-1819): An Insight into the American Acquisition of California," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 46:2 (1967), p. 114. Emphasis is in the original.

⁷⁷ The exchange between Friar Marcelino de San Vicente and Governor Alvarez de Abreu was copied and included in "Autos sobre decomiso de cantidad de fanegas de cacao en los puertos de Tucacas y Cuare," November 9, 1730, AGN, Comisos, Volume 12, Expediente 7, folios 163-179.

⁷⁸ Ibid., folios 164-169v.

3. That since 1658, when the Capuchin missions were first founded in Venezuela, over 30,000 Indians had been relocated to the Valleys of Barquisimeto and enjoyed better lives than those they would have led in the Llanos
4. That it was costly to repeatedly track down and return runaway Indians to their mission towns
5. That due to their nature, Indians were slow and inefficient laborers, capable only of producing hides, and this done slowly
6. That the Crown provided insufficient funds to sustain the missions in Venezuela⁷⁹

Given these suppositions, Friar Marcelino concluded that the Capuchin missionaries were justified in violating human laws—these included royal and ecclesiastical laws—in pursuit of higher ideals.

There is also evidence of connections between the Capuchins and the runaway slave population of the area. Andresote was one of many free pardos who lived in small hamlets in the San Felipe and Nirgua hinterlands. They worked in the cacao plantations of San Felipe as wage laborers; some also earned their living transporting cacao to the coast. This they did by mule train or, more often, in canoes along the Yaracuy River. Andresote was involved in this last activity. While all cacao and tobacco producers in the area hired them to transport their produce to market, the Capuchin missionaries in the San Felipe area enjoyed closer contacts with them than the other local producers. This became starkly clear when Andresote and some others refused to recognize the authority of RCG patrols, an act that turned them into rebels persecuted by the RCG patrols and the colonial authorities. Their refusal turned into a dangerous challenge to colonial authority when an expeditionary force sent out from San Felipe to subdue Andresote and his followers failed miserably, repulsed by the mountain residents fighting on their own turf.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ibid., folios 164v-165v.

⁸⁰ Felice Cardot, *La rebelión de Andresote*.

In November of 1731, during the Andresote rebellion, Sergeant Major don Félix de León y Castillo received at his home in San Felipe a load of tobacco and a letter, delivered by a man described as an Indian or a mestizo. He had been sent by Friar Francisco Campillo, president of the Capuchin mission of San Antonio de Turén.⁸¹ Campillo requested in the letter that León y Castillo deliver all the tobacco to Captain Andrés del Rosario. León y Castillo, in his testimony before Governor García de la Torre, in San Felipe directing the military campaign against Andresote and his followers, claimed he was not familiar with such a person. He asked around in San Felipe and learned that Andrés del Rosario was none other than Andresote. Shocked by such indiscretion on the part of the Capuchin friar, León y Castillo promptly sent the tobacco back without, he was quick to note, even unloading it from the backs of the mules on which it had arrived. Furthermore, he tore up the letter Campillo had sent him. Or so León y Castillo claimed in his testimony.⁸²

León y Castillo, an immigrant from the Canary Islands, was not the only San Felipe resident who traded with Friar Campillo. The Capuchin had served in the coastal mission of La Purísima Concepción de Tinajas, and he used to send the mission's crop to his agents in the city. Besides León y Castillo, he also dealt with Regidor Perpetuo don Juan Bautista Vindervoghel and don Pedro Marvés.⁸³ After he was reassigned to the llanos

⁸¹ "Sobre el trato ilícito que se decía del Padre Francisco Campillo," March 27, 1732, AHAC, Judiciales, Signatura 28-10, folios 1-2v.

⁸² Ibid. León y Castillo owned and operated a very successful mule train business, carrying other planters' cacao along the coast to Puerto Cabello. This may help explain why Campillo sought his services. See Piñero, *The Town of San Felipe*, p. 108.

⁸³ "Sobre el trato ilícito que se decía del Padre Francisco Campillo," folios 9, 11v-12. Vindervoghel was one of numerous Dutch immigrants who settled in San Felipe when it was known as Cerritos de Cocorote. For Dutch immigration to Cocorote by way of Curaçao, see Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, pp. 154-155. He gives the example of Adam Sisien, born in the United Provinces, and his wife Francisca Antonia Haslenbergh,

mission of Turén, Campillo maintained his contacts with his old sanfelipeño agents.

Vindervoghel in his testimony stated that he sold in his San Felipe store tobacco the friar sent from the Turén mission.⁸⁴ Campillo, in his defense, claimed that his current contact in San Felipe was Marvés, who was in charge of transferring the mission tobacco from San Felipe to the RCG factoría in Puerto Cabello.⁸⁵ With the load of tobacco delivered to León y Castillo's door, Campillo tried to maintain another one of his contacts, but the timing was bad.

Other witnesses deposed in the investigation ordered by Bishop Valverde claimed Campillo's commercial activity went beyond sending cacao and tobacco to his secular agents. Don Nicolás del Prado, a San Felipe vecino, accused Campillo of having a fleet of canoes on the Yaracuy River, which he used to trade with the Dutch.⁸⁶ Francisco Joseph de Viloria, another sanfelipeño vecino, testified that he saw Indians from either the Tinajas or the San Francisco Javier mission directing canoes owned by Campillo down the Yaracuy River to trade with the Dutch along the coast. He was sure they were on their way to Dutch sloops, and not a legal point of exchange, since at the time he saw them, there were no Spanish vessels in the local ports.⁸⁷ He added that though he had not

who settled in Cerritos de Cocorote around 1700. They owned a cacao estate and other properties. For further discussion see also Nieves Avellán de Tamayo, *La Nueva Segovia de Barquimeto* (Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1992), Volume 2, p. 275.

⁸⁴ "Sobre el trato ilícito que se decía del Padre Francisco Campillo," folio 12.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, folio 9.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, don Nicolás de Prado's testimony, February 6, 1734, folios 18v-19.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Francisco Joseph de Viloria's testimony, February 9, 1734, folios 19v-20.

seen it with his own eyes, he had heard that Campillo also sold textiles out of his house when he lived at the Tinajas mission.⁸⁸

The case brought against Friar Campillo, like so many others of its kind, reached no definitive conclusion. This was especially the case in proceedings against clergy. Foot-dragging and delays were common. Bishop Valverde struggled to find someone to carry out the investigation in San Felipe, and he found no one willing to travel to the Llanos to track down Friar Campillo. His first judge-prosecutor, Licentiate don Francisco Javier de Ayestarán, priest and ecclesiastic judge in Valencia, concluded after three weeks in San Felipe that there was insufficient evidence against Campillo to justify continuing the inquiry.⁸⁹ One of his leading witnesses, the secular priest at San Felipe, don Pedro Silvestre Rodríguez Galeas, dismissed the charges leveled by León y Castillo against Campillo. He stated that it was publicly known that most of the San Felipe vecinos, including León y Castillo, resented the Capuchin missionaries and considered them "enemies."⁹⁰

Dissatisfied with Ayestarán's efforts, Bishop Valverde reopened the case, this time giving the assignment to Doctor don Juan Pérez Hurtado, a priest and lawyer for the Audiencia de Santa Fé. Pérez Hurtado's work lasted less than two weeks. He collected testimony in San Felipe between February 4 and 16, 1734, and then determined that the

⁸⁸ Ibid., folio 20.

⁸⁹ Ibid., folio 17. Ayestarán completed his *sumaria* on May 26, 1733. León y Castillo first reported to Governor García de la Torre the delivery of the tobacco and letter on March 27, 1732. Bishop Valverde assigned Ayestarán to the case on July 12, 1732. Ayestarán opened the *sumaria* on May 6 of the following year, nine months after Valverde issued his order.

⁹⁰ Ibid., testimony of don Pedro Silvestre Rodríguez Galeas, May 9, 1733, folios 11v-12.

five-day journey to Mission Tugure, where Campillo resided, was too far.⁹¹ He requested the bishop reimburse him the sixty pesos he had spent traveling from El Tocuyo to San Felipe.⁹²

The advantages the clergy and especially the Capuchin missionaries enjoyed in furtive trade were no secret. They benefited from the physical and juridical protection offered by the province-wide mission system, and they used these protections to help integrate the various productive and distributive units of that system. Many colonial subjects outside the Church resented what they saw as the clergy's unfair advantage. Many colonial administrators, Juan Angel de Larrea among them, tried when they could to expose or check what they perceived as rampant contraband by clergymen with the Dutch. Just their cacao estates alone provoked the envy of sanfelipeño residents. Piñero indicates that most cacao plantations in San Felipe were small operations, with less than 2,000 trees.⁹³ Of 677 cacao plantations documented in the area by Olavarriaga, only 43 had more than 16,000 trees. Elsewhere, Piñero identifies don Bernardo de Matos y Machado and don Manuel de Montoya as the sanfelipeño estate owners with the most trees. Olavarriaga's 1720 report on the province listed Matos y Machado's total at 15,000 trees. Montoya was reported to have had 21,000 trees.⁹⁴ The mission of San Francisco Javier, with between 16 and 18,000 trees, was one of the largest cacao haciendas along the Yaracuy River.

⁹¹ Ibid., folios 17v-20v.

⁹² Ibid., folio 22.

⁹³ See Piñero, *The Town of San Felipe*, Table 13, p. 74.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 91.

The governors in Caracas were quick to recognize the potential for trouble in founding regular order missions close to the coast, although their main concern was not necessarily the well-being and proselytization of the relocated Indians. Governors like Lardizábal saw the enclave aspects of the missions and the exceptions and privileges enjoyed by them as a possible threat to central provincial government's control over intra- and inter-colonial transport and exchange. High-ranking authorities pushed two strategies. First, they repeatedly demanded that in the future no more missions be located along the coast. This was achieved fairly rapidly—the Crown in 1734 ordered such a ban. Second, they pushed the process of secularization, with the initial step of changing mission towns into *pueblos de doctrina* to be administered by a secular priests together with a civilian *corregidor*. The second goal the Capuchins resisted more effectively than the first, delaying the transfer of San Francisco Javier and Nuestra Señora del Carmen until the mid-1750s, a stall of over twenty years from the first order to begin the secularization process.

The Capuchins consolidated in the early eighteenth century an extensive system of missions that cut across and took advantage of the province's natural, human, and economic resources. By the end of the War of Spanish Succession, they had missions extending from the coast, at San Francisco Javier, Nuestra Señora del Carmen, Tinajas, and Mapubares in Coro, through the Segovia highlands, and deep into the Llanos. This was comparable with the Jesuit haciendas held by the College of Mérida, which covered similar ecological and productive zones, from Gibraltar, the port for the Venezuelan Andes and area of quality cacao production, to Llanos, with cattle raising. The Jesuits operated these estates for profit, the money to fund their urban education and missionary

efforts in Mérida. This differs from the Capuchins' enterprise, in which the missions were the productive and distributive units in the friars' commercial network.⁹⁵

Like the Jesuits to the west, the Capuchins were sharply criticized and mistrusted by other residents of the province of Venezuela. And as in the case of the Jesuits, not just in Mérida but also generally across Spain's American colonies, the Capuchins were resented for their elaborate, successful, and province-wide system of transportation, distribution, and storage of mission and non-mission products in the Capuchin case.⁹⁶ And while colonial subjects in various provincial settlements coveted elements of the Capuchins' economic machine, none possessed or could mobilize the resources to control and operate effectively all the pieces in the system. Transfer, for example, of the mission of San Francisco Javier from pueblo de misiones to pueblo doctrina did not entail the transfer of the mission's river-transport enterprise, or the transfer of the cattle and mules raised on missions in the Llanos and exploited by the coastal missions.

The Systems Break Down I: The 1741 Sublevación

The San Felipe *sublevación* turned on the cabildo's refusal to receive the governor-appointed justice of the peace. After De Larrea's death in 1739, José Villafañe briefly filled in as interim justice of the peace, but he was, in the eyes of Governor Zuloaga, too sympathetic to the municipal council and the local elite. In December of 1741 the governor appointed Ignacio de Basazábal, who had served in the same capacity in the Barquisimeto town of Carora, and whose time in office was characterized by continuing conflict with the local populace. The San Felipe cabildo convened on January 4, 1741,

⁹⁵ See Edda Samudio A. and David J. Robinson, *Jesuit Estates of the College of Mérida, Venezuela: 1629-1767* (Syracuse: Department of Geography, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1989), especially pp. 9-11.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

and rejected the new appointment, arguing that the viceroy of New Granada and not the governor of Venezuela had the authority to name justices of the peace. Basazábal, facing a hostile crowd of sanfelipeño vecinos, fled to the mission of San Javier. Governor Zuloaga responded by sending Lieutenant Governor Domingo López de Urrelo with a squadron of troops to put an end to San Felipe's insubordination. López de Urrelo and his men traveled to the Yaracuy River but did not enter the city of San Felipe, instead setting up camp just outside of the city. A standoff ensued until mid February, when the governor dissolved the troops and issued a general pardon. Some of the leaders of the sublevación were forced to leave San Felipe and exiled to other parts of the province. The viceroy eventually confirmed the governor's prerogative in naming justices of the peace, and Basazábal stayed on as the city's justice of the peace.

The celebratory historiography of the 1741 sublevación presents the San Felipe cabildo and its rejection of the governor's appointee as representative of a generalized proto-independent sentiment. The residents of neighboring jurisdictions failed to show much sympathy for San Felipe. In fact, most rejected the San Felipe cabildo's rejection of Basazábal. They agreed with the governor that it was an unacceptable, rebellious act, and when the governor made the call for support to subdue San Felipe, he received widespread support in Nirgua and Barquisimeto.⁹⁷

While Barquisimeto's mobilization is to be expected, given the lingering resentment felt by Barquisimeto residents, especially cabildo members, towards the breakaway jurisdiction of San Felipe, Nirgua's participation may come as a bit more surprising, until one looks closely at the dynamics of smuggling and anti-smuggling in

⁹⁷ See Trujillo, *Motín y sublevación*, pp. 73-74. A total of 1400 men gathered in Guama to counter the sanfelipeños. San Felipe Alcalde Ramos Morado sided with Basazábal.

the region. The closing of the Yaracuy River meant that legally, more goods were to move to market at Puerto Cabello along the Nirgua side of the river, since the royal road to the port passed along that side and then turned east across Nirgua's slim piece of the coast. This meant more money for Nirgua, since each load of tobacco or cacao that crossed the district was taxed one peso. This also meant more extra-legal activity, including taxing, at the Punta de Morón, as much of the legal trade along the coastal royal road veered north was redirected north once it reached the point.

The vecinos of Barquisimeto noted this as early as 1725.⁹⁸ In their attempt to justify their violent attacks on Cerritos de Cocorote—specifically, the 1724 raid—they claimed they were not alone in opposing trade and transport along the Yaracuy River. The residents of Nirgua also wanted the restrictions maintained and enforced:

para lo cual se exhortaron las justicias de la ciudad de Nirgua, por ser del un lado la vega del río del Yaracuy hasta el mar de su jurisdicción, que por ella tienen camino que han abierto para dicho trato [con Puerto Cabello] los comerciantes, y no se ha podido conseguir su efecto por entero por las contradicciones que ha habido.⁹⁹

The vecinos of neighboring settlements recognized the San Felipe cabildo's action as a push for expanded authority, and they took this as a threat. A weakened San Felipe meant greater opportunities for Nirgua, and vice versa.

Historians who have studied the 1740 San Felipe insubordination have also attributed the town's rejection of the newly appointed justice of the peace to strong anti-Basque sentiment. This forms part of a wider argument about Basques in eighteenth-century Venezuelan society in general. The argument, in very simplified terms, goes as

⁹⁸ Carrocera, *Misión de los capuchinos*, Document 189, "Oposición puesta por los vecinos de Barquisimeto a que los misioneros capuchinos fundasen una villa o ciudad en los llamados Cerritos de Cocorote," December 1, 1725, pp. 150-154.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

follows: the Crown granted to the RCG in 1728 a commercial monopoly, the RCG was run by Basques, Basques flooded into the colony, serving in both the monopoly trade company and in colonial administration. The Venezuelan colonial subjects resented the company and therefore hated the Basques.

Basques were not the only ethnic group that migrated in large numbers to the province in the eighteenth century. Canary Islanders represented the other major group, distinguishable among the peninsulares who came to the province. The Capuchin missionaries were almost all from the eastern parts of Spain—Valencia, Majorca, or Minorca.¹⁰⁰

De Larrea, like Basazábal, was Basque. The residents of San Felipe embraced him as one of their own, while they rejected the other without giving him the chance to take office. While they certainly used ethnic difference to explain, justify, or foment conflict,¹⁰¹ in this case, Basazábal's Basque origin does not explain what happened in San Felipe in early 1741.

Some students of San Felipe's colonial history, and more specifically the 1741 sublevación, have emphasized De Larrea's persecution of alcalde don Esteban Ramos Morado as proof the city's cabildo members were disgruntled with the RCG and provincial government in the years leading up to the rejection of Basazábal. The smuggling case De Larrea brought against Ramos Morado would indicate that the rancor that exploded against Basazábal was not new and that it had been brewing for some time.

¹⁰⁰ I have yet to encounter in the criticisms and attacks on the Capuchins, reference to the regional origin of the friars. Their Valencian and Mallorcan identities, important to the fathers, did not seem to have much significance for colonial subjects in the province of Venezuela.

¹⁰¹ See the chapter on Valencia for a discussion of the tensions between creoles, Canary Islanders, and Basques. See also Manuel Hernández González, *Los canarios en la Venezuela colonial (1670-1810)* (Arafo, Tenerife, Spain: Taller de Historia, 1999).

Quintero, in his review of conflicts between Venezuelan cabildos and the provincial governor over the appointment of justices of the peace, argues that Maestre de Campo Esteban Ramos Morado, tried by De Larrea for smuggling, was one of three prominent sanfelipeños who felt most threatened by the new appointment. Ramos Morado and the other two—Alcalde Ordinario Pablo Arias y Escobar and city scribe and notary Francisco de Viñas—were heavily involved in smuggling.¹⁰² Quintero relies exclusively on Trujillo's study of the 1741 conflict. This author, in turns, depends exclusively on the criminal investigation and trials carried out after the "sublevación."¹⁰³ Perazzo, in his history of the state of Yaracuy, identifies two smuggling "syndicates" in the San Felipe area: One was led by Miguel Cordero, originally from Caracas, accused of instigating Andresote in his sublevación against the RCG. De Larrea proclaimed Cordero a traitor and on July 1, 1732, had him executed.¹⁰⁴ Don Esteban, identified by Perazzo as cacao planter and alcalde ordinario at the time of the Andresote uprising, ran the other.¹⁰⁵ According to Perazzo, De Larrea persecuted both informal organizations.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Quintero, *El teniente justicia mayor*, p. 289. He relies heavily for almost all his description of the 1741 cabildo-provincial government conflict in San Felipe on Trujillo's *Motín y sublevación*. Quintero's discussion is pp. 287-296.

¹⁰³ Trujillo, *Motín y sublevación*. Trujillo's main source for the work is the "Expediente sobre el tumulto de la Ciudad de San Felipe," housed at the AGI in Seville and copied by Brother Nectario María.

¹⁰⁴ Perazzo, *Historia del Estado Yaracuy*, p. 46. In Perazzo's words, De Larrea tried Cordero for treason, "pasándole por armas" on July 1, 1732. This is exceptional. Perazzo does not indicate whether or not De Larrea sentenced Cordero to death. Death sentences were extremely rare in contraband cases from eighteenth-century Venezuela, and they were handed down by an authority much higher in the administrative hierarchy, at times the governor but usually the Crown. Cordero's widow filed suit against De Larrea and won a ruling by the Audiencia de Santo Domingo that instructed De Larrea to pay her 1000 pesos for having surpassed his authority and improperly punished Cordero. He had already died by the time the sentence reached Venezuela, so the onus of paying the fine passed on to his heirs. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵ Ramos Morado was a regular member of the San Felipe cabildo, repeating as alcalde ordinario at least three times after the Andresote incident: in De Larrea's last year as teniente—1739, in 1743, and in 1747. From the list of municipal officers during the governorship of Gabriel Zuloaga, in Otto Pikaza's *Don Gabriel José de Zuloaga en la gobernación de Venezuela (1737-1747)* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios

Evidence collected in other cases gives some indication of what set De Larrea against Cordero. The justice of the peace worked to eliminate rivals, real or potential. As discussed above, in November 1737 De Larrea brought suit against don Juan Manuel Montero for failing come to the aid of the small fort and warehouse (*almacén*) at the mouth of the Aroa river when the Dutch attacked on October 19, 1737.¹⁰⁷ Doña Ana Lucía Sánchez, Montero's wife, who organized his legal defense, called two witnesses to testify who made mention of De Larrea's past violence and abuse of power. Pedro Bonifacio López, a Portuguese resident of the town of Los Mapubares, Coro, commented that De Larrea was once brought to Caracas as a prisoner for having pulled a man out of the church in the San Felipe town of San Nicolás.¹⁰⁸ Pedro Bacilio de Olivares added to this. He testified that De Larrea had to appear before an ecclesiastical judge in Caracas because he was accused not only of pulling a man from church in San Nicolás, but also of ordering him shot with a harquebus.¹⁰⁹

The case brought by De Larrea against Ramos Morado did not originate over smuggling, at least not directly. The dispute, like so many others in San Felipe and other towns on the provincial interior, began over jurisdiction. Specifically, De Larrea sought to have the *alcalde ordinario* reprimanded for having exceeded his authority as municipal

Hispano-Americanos, 1963), Appendix 1 of Chapter Three, pp. 157-180. Pikaza's essay was also published under the same title in *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 19 (1962), pp. 501-695.

¹⁰⁶ Perazzo, *Historia del Estado Yaracuy*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁷ "Causa fulminada contra don Juan Manuel Montero, cabo a guerra, por no haber acudido al saqueo de los holandeses en la boca del Río de Aroa," November 20, 1737, AANH, RP, Civiles, Signatura 1-204-6, folios 1-51v.

¹⁰⁸ Testimony of Pedro Bonifacio López, Los Mapubares, June 15, 1738, in *Ibid.*, folios 33v-34v.

¹⁰⁹ Testimony of Pedro Bacilio de Olivares, Los Mapubares, June 15, 1738, in *Ibid.*, folios 34v-36v.

council member when he jailed Lucas Alvarado, one of the soldiers at the Tucacas outpost. Alvarado had been accused of beating an Indian man without cause, and Ramos Morado, as a *maestre de campo* in San Felipe, determined he had authority to detain the soldier. De Larrea obviously disagreed. He ordered Ramos Morado arrested on July 16, 1739; Ramos turned himself in to the Casas Reales that same morning.¹¹⁰

This was not the first time the two men had had their differences. From the testimony gathered by both sides in the case, one finds indications of a smoldering animosity between them, malice that found expression in disputes over military and economic policies and restrictions imposed on residents of San Felipe during the 1730s. Those who testified on De Larrea's behalf insisted that the *teniente* had maintained throughout his tenure good relations with all *cabildo* members except one, don Esteban Ramos Morado.¹¹¹

Though the crux of the case at hand was a specific issue of authority—whether or not the *alcalde ordinario* has the authority to detain and punish a soldier in the *teniente's* guard—the case formed part of an ongoing dispute between the two men. Ramos Morado objected to the policies implemented by De Larrea as justice of the peace and by the RCG when it was established in San Felipe in 1731. Don Felipe Valdés, who testified on De Larrea's behalf, stated the issue broadly: the rivalry between the two men was over “la competencia sobre puntos de jurisdicción.”¹¹² Other *sanfelipeños* gave more concrete

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, folio 160v.

¹¹¹ He did, nonetheless, have a confrontation with the *corregidor* of the pueblo of Guama, a conflict which, like the one with Ramos Morado, turned on jurisdictional disputes. Testimony of don Felipe Valdés, *Ibid.*, July 16, 1739, folio 160. Valdés refers to De Larrea's dispute with the *corregidor* as a “competencia” and adds that the *corregidor* was eventually exonerated, I assume by the governor.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

evidence, citing the policies Ramos Morado opposed and the ways in which he expressed his disapproval.

Governor Zuloaga ruled in Ramos Morado's favor, determining that De Larrea lacked the authority to arrest the *alcalde*. He ordered an inquiry into De Larrea's possible excesses.

Zuloaga assumed the governorship in 1737, replacing Lardizábal as the maximum civil and military authority in the province. This broke the first link in De Larrea's chain of personal and professional connections. De Larrea's death broke things wide open. The San Felipe *alcaldes* pushed to augment their authority. The man who replaced De Larrea helped heighten political tensions. José Villafañe's weakness in the face of local pressure and his inexperience in balancing Crown, provincial, and local interests, not to mention his unabashed complicity in trading with the Dutch, exposed the system of selective support for contraband trade that had operated relatively smoothly during De Larrea's tenure. The War of Jenkins' Ear had begun. While the governor could possibly have turned a blind eye to such arrangements in times of peace, the war made San Felipe's openness to foreigners and the governor's representative's disinclination to limit it a danger in terms of military strategy. Zuloaga determined he needed someone without local ties, someone who could send a clear message to the Dutch and the English, as well as the local elites of San Felipe and other provincial cities.

With De Larrea gone and Villafañe far below the daunting task of replacing him, the *alcaldes* of San Felipe quickly stepped in, filling the power vacuum made by De Larrea's death and exerting their authority so as to secure municipal control over affairs that could have fallen to either municipal or provincial authorities. On December 29,

1739, just less than two weeks after De Larrea's passing, Pedro Pablo Gómez de Triana, the alcalde of Guanare, requested that the governor intervene and correct what he perceived as an administrative transgression by the San Felipe alcaldes.¹¹³ He had, following orders from the governor which had been passed on to him by the deceased De Larrea, sent five prisoners to San Felipe to be transferred to Puerto Cabello. He sent them with three pairs of shackles, five pairs of handcuffs with four locks, and five riding saddles with three reins. The San Felipe alcaldes, instead of facilitating the transfer of the prisoners to Puerto Cabello, decided to take over the case themselves. They detained the five prisoners, sent away the cabo who was assigned to accompany them, took the papers he was carrying and confiscated the shackles, handcuffs, and tack. What they eventually did with the five prisoners and the goods is not clear. The case filed by Gómez de Triana ends with his plea for the governor to intervene.¹¹⁴

The San Felipe cabildo members were familiar with Basazábal's heavy-handedness as justice of the peace in Carora. They also recognized the governor's design in naming him. The majority of the cabildo members rejected him without even giving him the opportunity to take office.

The Systems Break Down II: The Transfer of the Missions to Secular Authority

Shortly after the city's founding, the residents of San Felipe, especially cacao plantation owners, focused their energies on dismantling the local mission system, in hopes of transferring the mission towns and plantations to secular authority. The mission

¹¹³ "Auto contra los alcaldes de San Felipe, Pedro Pablo Gómez de Triana, alcalde de Guanare, los denuncia ante el Gobernador Zuloaga," December 29, 1739, published as Expediente Número 6 in Manuel C. Pinto, ed., *Documentos*, pp. 127-128. The original is found in AGN, Capitanía General, Diversos, Volume 21, folios 144-144v.

¹¹⁴ He was concerned about getting back the shackles, handcuffs, locks, tack, and especially the saddles, which, he noted, had been loaned to him.

of Nuestra Señora del Carmen never developed into a cacao plantation of any import, but it did occupy lands that could have been used for other purposes. The mission of Tinajas, on the coast near the town of San Nicolás, gave the Capuchins a prime position for coastal storage and observation. The real prize in this struggle was San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras, which consistently ranked as one of San Felipe's largest cacao plantations. In a 1745 inventory of the mission's properties, the hacienda had 24,000 cacao trees, producing about 300 fanegas each year.¹¹⁵ Three years later the total number of trees was 17,379, and a 1752 inventory listed 18,000 trees.¹¹⁶

Sanfelipeños who coveted the missionaries' resources had some powerful tools. The role Capuchin friars had played in resolving Andresote's challenge to RCG authority had drawn to the Crown's attention the close relations the San Felipe missionaries had with muleteers, canoeists, and others deeply involved in trade with the Dutch. The attacks that civilian authorities in Caracas and San Felipe had leveled against the Capuchins, claiming they used their coastal missions as smuggling centers and refuges for smugglers, gained credence with the Crown. In April 1734 the Consejo de Indias determined that no more missions should be set up along the Venezuelan coast, that all missions should be located at least 20 leagues inland, and that the San Felipe missions were to be transferred to secular authority within ten years of their founding.¹¹⁷ The

¹¹⁵ "Relaciones y listas de los Pueblos de Misiones y los Indios que de ellas hay reducidos y sacados por los RRPP Capuchinos," November 10, 1745, AGN, Misiones, Volume 1, Expediente 3, folio 8.

¹¹⁶ "Sobre pretender los Padres Capuchinos de las Misiones de esta provincia que los Pueblos de San Francisco Javier y Nuestra Señora del Carmen se pongan en eclesiásticos seculares," May 22, 1745, AGN, Misiones, Volume 9, Expediente 9, folio 233; "Remisión hecha por los RRPP Capuchinos de los curatos de San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras y Todos Santos de Calabozo," March 13, 1752, AGN, Misiones, Volume 1, Expediente 4, folio 25v.

¹¹⁷ This ruling is copied in "Sobre pretender los Padres Capuchinos," folio 216v.

Crown, in a real cédula of October 5, 1737, corroborated the Consejo's ruling.¹¹⁸ The Crown determined that if in ten years time from the date the missions were founded, the Indians brought there had been successfully converted and that they lived in peace, then the missions should be changed to pueblos de doctrina, under secular authority. Although it was only a matter of time before the Capuchins would have to abandon their coastal missions, they managed to postpone that date much longer than the ten years required by authorities in Spain. They gave up Nuestra Señora del Carmen without a fight in the mid-1730s. It was not until 1752 that San Francisco Javier became a pueblo de doctrina.

The land-owning residents of San Felipe, represented by the cabildo, set their sights first on Nuestra Señora del Carmen.¹¹⁹ In their petition to the governor in Caracas, they argued that the mission had long ceased to serve its purpose and that it hindered the growth of the city. The lands surrounding the mission, the cabildo's representative don Francisco Montero Bolaños explained, were already being worked by sanfelipeño vecinos. The vecinos requested that the remaining Indians on the mission be transferred to San Francisco Javier, where they could be put to better use. This would give San Felipe's vecinos and residents access to much needed lands in the vicinity of the city.

The city continued to press. The governors in Caracas joined in the effort to transfer the mission; Governor Ricardos was especially active. Transfer to pueblo de doctrina meant that the priest serving the town would be named by the bishop, and the

¹¹⁸ The real cédula is copied in "Autos hechos sobre las misiones de San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras [sic], jurisdicción de San Felipe," August 29, 1739, AGN, Diversos, Volume 20, Expediente 12, folios 340-347.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., folios 337-356.

steward in charge of the town and resident Indians' economic activities would be named by the governor. The highest civil and Church authorities in the province, then, turned their attention to San Felipe in hopes of gaining greater control over the mission estates. Governor Zuloaga and Bishop Juan García Abadiano made a push for the transfer in 1745, only to be rebuffed by the governor's own legal advisor.¹²⁰

The change finally came in 1752.¹²¹ The San Felipe cabildo finally had the Capuchins removed from the riverside plantation, but the vecinos' hopes for control over the mission town and hacienda were denied. The governor and bishop in Caracas minimized local authority over the newly created pueblo de doctrina of San Francisco Javier and maximized its ties to Caracas. The vicar-general of the Caracas bishopric, Doctor don Carlos de Herrera, declared the town exempt from and independent of the parochial jurisdictions of Barquisimeto and San Felipe.¹²² The administration of religious affairs in the town were assigned not to one of the local priests of San Felipe, as the local populace had anticipated, but to Doctor don Felipe de Prado, the bishopric's *clérigo de menores órdenes*.¹²³ He handed over his duties to his apoderado, Licentiate don Juan Pablo Baraona.¹²⁴ There had been a competition for the position of *mayordomo administrador*. Three vecinos of San Felipe applied for the post: don Gabriel Bautista del

¹²⁰ "Sobre pretender los Padres Capuchinos," folios 165-259v.

¹²¹ "Remisión hecha por los RRPP Capuchinos," folios 24-102v.

¹²² The same was not done with the mission of Todos Santos de Calabozo. The new pueblo de doctrina joined the Parroquia de San Sebastián de los Reyes. *Ibid.*, folios 33-36.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, folios 76-77v.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, folios 80-81.

Campo, don Joseph Antonio de Prado, and don Juan Gerónimo Clavijo.¹²⁵ It fell to the governor to select the winner, and Governor Ricardos, in October of 1752, confirmed Del Campo, who was already managing the estate, as steward of the town and its fields. He had already been serving as acting mayordomo. The governor's decision made his post permanent and rewarded him for his many years of service to the Crown and the RCG as head of the local beach patrol.¹²⁶ The plantation's annual yield was to be divided three ways: one-third for San Francisco Javier's head priest, one-third for the maintenance of the town's church, and one-third for the town's resident Indians. In addition, 50 pesos a year were to go towards a sacristan who was to teach the Indians in reading, writing, and Christian doctrine. The mayordomo was responsible for dividing up these amounts, and he personally managed the one-third assigned to the Church. The townspeople finally saw the great cacao fields of San Francisco Javier loosened from Capuchin control, but the combined forces of the governor and the bishop's office in Caracas denied them the access they had anticipated.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Ibid., folios 49-50.

¹²⁶ Ibid., folios 51-52. The manager's salary was to be 4% of the estate's annual yield.

¹²⁷ For further documentation of the transfer, see Carrocera, *Misión de los capuchinos*, Document 247. "Cédula al gobernador de Venezuela ordenándole se devolviese a los indios del pueblo de San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras la hacienda de cacao, que tenían al ser entregado al obispo por los misioneros capuchinos." Buen Retiro, 16 III 1754. [from AGI, Santo Domingo, 886, Registro de Cédulas, G-49, ff. 356-358], p. 25; Document 246a. "Cédula al gobernador de Venezuela, dándose el rey por enterado de la dejación de la villa de Todos los Santos de Calabozo y pueblo misional de San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras, hecha por los Capuchinos en manos del obispo y gobernador." Buen Retiro, 14 X 1753. [from AGI, Santo Domingo, 886, Registro de Cédulas, G-49, ff. 316-317], pp. 23-24; Document 246. "Dejación de la villa de Todos los Santos de Calabozo y del pueblo misional San Francisco Javier de Agua de Culebras hecha por el Prefecto P. Pedro José de Villanueva, aceptación por parte del Vicario general de Caracas (Caracas, 13 marzo 1752) y del gobernador de Venezuela (Caracas, 15 marzo 1752) y carta del Vicario general al rey comunicándole lo hecho." Caracas, 8 IV 1752. [from AGI, Santo Domingo, 804], pp. 18-23.

The Capuchins retained their key position by the sea. By the time they finally yielded control over San Francisco Javier, the Capuchins had reestablished the mission near San Nicolás and begun work to establish a new one southwest of San Felipe. Friar Pedro de Ubrique, who had been involved in the transfer proceedings for Mission San Francisco Javier, had at the same time been working to rebuild the mission of Nuestra Señora de la Caridad de las Tinajas, bringing in Guajiba and Guamo Indians from the Llanos in 1753 and rebuilding the church, which had burned down in 1754. By 1758 the mission had around 200 men and women.¹²⁸ In 1750, Church and civil authorities initiated work to separate off lands for a new Capuchin mission in Buria, an area disputed by Barquisimeto and Nirgua.¹²⁹

Conclusion

When De Larrea died, the various social forces which he had managed to keep balanced for a decade, pulled in their own directions as they vied for advantage in the San Felipe cacao economy. The cabildo sought to expand its power and reduce that of the justice of the peace. The governor aimed to expand the justice's power at the expense of the cabildo and appointed Basazábal because he had done just that as justice of the peace in Carora. The San Felipe cabildo assumed he would act similarly in his new appointment and rejected him before he even took up his post. Basazábal's approach to administration stood in sharp contrast to the flexibility that characterized De Larrea. De Larrea was successful as an administrator—at the same time trusted by the governor and

¹²⁸ Carrocera, *Misión de los capuchinos*, Document 253, "Estado de la misión y problemas de la misma, expuestos al obispo de Caracas por el Prefecto Padre Pedro de Ubrique," Caracas, September 9, 1758, p. 60.

¹²⁹ "Buría, los Padres Capuchinos misioneros pretenden fundar el pueblo diez legua de Barquisimeto, 1750," AGN, Misiones, Volume II, Expediente 5, folios 155-178.

respected by the sanfelipeño landed elite—because he allowed each social element he served to express and realize their interests through his office and through his various roles. The San Felipe cabildo, representative of a community that had flourished thanks to smuggling, did not reject the RCG, the Crown-sanctioned monopoly trade company. Both took root in San Felipe at the same time, and with De Larrea's help, neither tried to eliminate the other's preferred mode of commercial exchange. The cabildo rejected a provincial authority whose record in the interior proved to them that he would not try to balance legal monopoly trade with extra-legal trade.

De Larrea was also successful because he integrated most pieces in the dual dynamics of smuggling and its repression under a single system of political power and patronage. Either he or his trusted allies controlled most steps in the productive and transportive processes in one specific domain—the Yaracuy River Valley. Also, the governor and the RCG tended to defer to De Larrea and his allies on sanfelipeño issues, giving them, their collaborators, and their clients greater leeway within the district. In San Felipe, social groups that may have held different views on trading with the RCG and the Dutch of Curaçao found common ground in their commitment to the justice of the peace and the stability offered by the syndicate he assembled.

Within San Felipe's civil network, weak and newly formed formal institutions were bolstered by stronger and older informal institutions. The ecclesiastic network, in contrast, was characterized by the strength and longevity of the mission system's formal institutional framework. The three San Felipe mission and the friars who directed them played important roles in the Capuchins' commercial activities in the Province of Venezuela, but the order's participation in extra-legal trade did not depend exclusively on

these sites and individuals. The Capuchins' resource base was diverse and extensive enough to facilitate adjustments as different pieces of the system gained or lost significance.¹³⁰ Vertically and horizontally integrated, the Capuchins' commercial enterprise did not depend on outside forces to function, even though they did hire and collaborate with outsiders. This, the legal privileges enjoyed by religious orders and their members, and the ability to relocate quickly people and other resources to other sites within the system when they were threatened or endangered solidified the Capuchins' trading system. Many outsiders turned to the Capuchins to get their goods to market. By doing so, they insulated themselves from attacks or persecution for smuggling, as accusations and repressive efforts were normally directed at the order or the individual friars, and not at the civilians who took advantage of their network.

¹³⁰ For example, when the order's San Felipe mission came under attack for smuggling and scrutiny for secularization, the Capuchins increased their canoe-transportation activities along the Cojedes River in the llanos. This allowed them to move goods out of the province by way of the Orinoco River. In 1737 Lardizábal sent De Larrea to Guanare to investigate the expansion of the Capuchins' trade across the llanos. De Larrea reported on the Capuchins' activities along the Cojedes River in a brief document contained in "Expediente criminal sobre decomiso de una carga de aguardiente de caña, camino de Petare, a un peón," Caracas, April 29, 1737, AGN, Comisos, Volume 16, Expediente 1, folios 1-9. The document in question is found on folios 6-9.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION: THE RESILIENCE OF INFORMALITY IN EIGHTEENTH-
CENTURY VENEZUELA

I learned too late that you need just as good a brain to make a crooked million as an honest million. These days, you apply for a license to steal from the public. If I had my time again, I'd make sure I got that license first.

—Lucky Luciano¹

Yo pienso que la institución no solamente es una cosa que tú puedes definir como un organismo, como un cuerpo, como un ente que te ayuda a resolver los problemas, sino que además es un estado mental. Uno puede resolver las cosas por la taquilla o por el amiguete. Si las resuelves por el amiguete, tú no tienes una cabeza institucional. Si tiendes a resolverla por la taquilla, evidentemente cuentas con que la taquilla va a funcionar, porque está para eso: para solucionarle el problema al ciudadano. Ahora, nosotros en Venezuela lo más seguro es que no vayamos a la taquilla, sino que, si tenemos al amiguete, vamos antes al amiguete y después a la taquilla, si aquél no funciona. No estamos acostumbrados a funcionar institucionalmente.

—Graciela Soriano de García-Pelayo²

Y que no me vengán con que no somos suizos, porque, en efecto, acepto que no somos Suiza, pero tampoco quiero que Venezuela sea Afganistán.

—Antonio Pasquali³

¹ Lucky Luciano, 1962, quoted in Robert Lacey, *Little Man: Meyer Lansky and the Gangster Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1991), p. 405.

² Graciela Soriano de García-Pelayo in Gloria Majella Bastidas, "Este proceso revolucionario ha sido provocado arteramente." Interview with Graciela Soriano de García-Pelayo. *El Nacional* (Caracas), Sunday, May 12, 2002. In English: "I think that the institution is not only a thing that you can define as an organism, as a body, as an entity that helps you resolve problems. It is also a mental state. One can resolve things at the ticket counter or through one's buddy. If you resolve things through your friend, you do not have an institutional mind. If you tend to resolve them through the ticket counter, evidently you count on it to work because that is what it is for: to solve the citizen's problem. Now we in Venezuela most probably will not go to the ticket office but instead, if we have a buddy, we'll see the friend first. And if that does not work, then we go to the ticket counter. We are not accustomed to functioning institutionally."

³ Antonio Pasquali in Ewald Scharfenberg, "Chávez usa los medios como un dictador africano." Interview with Antonio Pasquali. *El Nacional* (Caracas), Sunday, December 15, 2002, p. A7. In English: "And don't tell me that we're not like the Swiss because indeed, I accept this isn't Switzerland, but nor do I want Venezuela to become Afghanistan."

Curaçao and Venezuela in the Atlantic Context

In the early eighteenth century European demand for American and Asian commodities took an unprecedented turn, as it expanded exponentially and shifted from luxuries to mass-produced and cheaper raw materials and finished goods. Advances in long-distance trade and finance pioneered by the Dutch, such as the rise of the entrepôt, the reduction of protection costs,⁴ and the transatlantic triangular trade, lowered shipping and storage costs, which allowed for lower prices in European commodities markets. Major shifts in the patterns of long-distance trade and imperial designs resulted, and these produced intense rivalries at all levels. Following the lead set by the Netherlands in the previous century, France and England pieced together mercantile trading empires that spanned the globe. England eventually surpassed the Netherlands as Western Europe's leading supplier of New World and Asian products. The seaborne powers of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world struggled for privileged access to European consumers, dominance in the West African slave trade, control over New World territories, and access to formal and informal markets in Spain's American empire. Within these imperial systems, colonies competed with one another for advantaged positions within mercantile systems of production and trade. Production and exchange expanded. And within each colony, heated rivalries developed as various groups struggled to secure advantage in the system of production and exchange that tied them to distant European markets. Planters occupied and cleared more land, grew more cacao, sugar, and tobacco, bought more slaves, and hired more peons. Merchants increased their inventories and

⁴ Frederick C. Lane, "Economic Consequences of Organized Violence," *Journal of Economic History* 28 (1958), pp. 401-417; North, "Transaction Costs in History;" Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns*; Virginia Haufler, *Dangerous Commerce: Insurance and the Management of International Risk* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

widened their investments. Colonial administrators increased their numbers and extended their reach into previously neglected regions and activities. It is within this context of a rapidly expanding system of trade and consumption in the Atlantic world that one must understand the dynamics of smuggling and anti-smuggling in Venezuela in the early eighteenth century.

While during these years the Dutch international commercial system faced serious challenges in the East Indies and in Europe, it continued to enjoy advantage in the southern West Indies. Over the course of the century the English and French successfully implemented restrictive mercantilist policies, imitating important elements of the system put together by the Dutch. But while they achieved greater, though not exclusive, control over their own Caribbean colonies, they could not penetrate what remained an exclusive Dutch domain, the Tierra Firme coast, from Cumaná in New Andalusia to Santa Marta and Riohacha in New Granada. The rivalry here was between the legal trade with Spain and New Spain and the extra-legal trade with the Dutch entrepôt of Curaçao.⁵

Dutch merchants first took interest in Curaçao, and wrested it from the Spanish, in 1634 as part of their Caribbean-wide search for reliable sources of salt. The desert island, unsuited for the tropical agriculture that came to dominate many other islands in the Caribbean, was for the first two decades of Dutch occupation a military outpost from which the West Indies Company tracked Spanish shipping, especially the fleets in and out of Cartagena and Portobelo, and launched raids on the high seas and on coastal settlements in Spain's American colonies. But by the middle of the century the

⁵ Israel, *Dutch Primacy*; Emmer, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy*; Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas*; Klooster, *Illicit Riches*; Aizpurua, *Curacao y la Costa de Caracas*; and Grahn, *The Political Economy of Smuggling*.

company's directors had shifted strategies, accepting what merchant houses and state officials in Amsterdam had advocated during the war with Spain: a move away from violent confrontation with Spain and towards more peaceful penetration of the Spanish empire through trade.

The United Provinces' rise as Europe's commercial engine over the course of the long seventeenth century facilitated this change of mind. The republic, and in particular, the city of Amsterdam, enjoyed unrivaled dominance in shipping, finance, storage, and distribution of goods, finished and primary, from around the world. Amsterdam was the urban hub for a system originally built on the Baltic transit trade. By the second half of the seventeenth century, the city was the center for a massive merchant marine that offered low freight rates and an unequaled capacity to deliver bulk goods at low cost and in large quantities. Amsterdam hosted Europe's first permanent commodity exchange, where the goods and stocks of large-scale joint-stock companies were traded. It was also the center of European finance: its bankers offered greater liquidity than their rivals in other European cities. The Dutch state pushed the articulation of these elements, as well as the production of textiles in the various provinces, as part of a mercantilist policy characterized by international trade and a powerful, interventionist state.⁶

On Curaçao the shift first manifested itself through the slave trade. In the 1650s the island became the prime source for slaves for the island colonies of the Spanish Caribbean and by the end of the century, for *Tierra Firme* as well. From the slave trade Curaçao expanded and diversified its role as Caribbean entrepôt. European foodstuffs, alcoholic beverages, and finished goods were stored and distributed there, as were

⁶ Israel, *Dutch Primacy*; Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century*, pp. 1270-158; Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, pp. 152-153; Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, pp. 176-193, 250-263.

regional products such as flour from North America, mules from Venezuela, specie from New Spain, and textiles from China by way of New Spain. From Curaçao these goods were sent out along transatlantic and regional circuits.⁷

From the late seventeenth through the eighteenth century, the first Atlantic boom solidified Curaçao's already tight relationship with the Province of Venezuela. Venezuela's agricultural commodity production grew over the course of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Spanish Crown's restrictive commercial policy, irregular shipping to the colony, and uncompetitive prices pushed many Venezuelan producers and merchants towards the Dutch, who offered better prices for their cacao, tobacco, and hides, better European manufactures in exchange, and a more consistent demand than the registry ships that infrequently visited the Venezuelan coast.⁸

Spanish Imperial Concerns and Local Arrangements

The United Provinces' European rivals in the Caribbean followed their lead in implementing protectionist economic policies and fomenting the formation of joint-stock companies. The Bourbon monarchs of Spain were no exception to this, although they did not enjoy the same success in excluding the Dutch from their colonies' overseas trade as the English and French.⁹ After the War of Spanish Succession, the Spanish Crown reviewed Hapsburg colonial policies and the economic state of the West Indies and determined that existing policy and their application, especially in Venezuela, neglected the great commercial potential the colonies presented to the metropole. Reforms targeted

⁷ Israel, *Dutch Primacy*; Emmer, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy*; Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast*; idem, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas*; and Klooster, *Illicit Riches*.

⁸ Emmer, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy*; and Klooster, *Illicit Riches*.

⁹ Emmer, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy*, pp. 11-32.

two problems: first, the colonies' blatant violation of monopoly trade regulations, and second, the fragmentation of political, commercial, and military administration within the colonies. They aimed to consolidate vertical and horizontal control over colonial economies as well as their regulation.

In the Province of Venezuela between 1713 and 1757, the Spanish imperial state tried to centralize control over trade and political authority through two mechanisms. First, the Crown granted the Royal Guipuzcoa Company exclusive commercial privileges in 1728. Second, both the presence and responsibilities of the provincial government were enlarged through the expansion of the governor's duties, the creation of the office of lieutenant governor, and the extension of the office of justice of the peace. These changes aimed to limit the powers and autonomy of local cabildos.¹⁰

While the centralizing strategies of the early eighteenth century represented a break with Hapsburg rule, the impulse towards vertical and horizontal integration was not new in Venezuela or anywhere else in the Spanish colonies. The inclination, in government and business, existed long before these reforms and lingered long after the Bourbon monarchs were gone from the American scene. It was an impulse that operated at all levels of colonial society, from the Crown through the Council of Indies to the governor, his justices of the peace, their cabos, and all municipal councils and individual council members. The unpredictability of life in colonial Venezuela often made this a survival strategy. The difference, however, was that now the imperial state sought to eliminate permanently commercial and political rivals and push the powers of the provincial

¹⁰ Quintero, *El teniente justicia mayor*; Hussey, *The Caracas Company*; Aizpurua, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*, pp. 192-238; and Ferry, *The Colonial Elite of Caracas*.

government and the monopoly trade company into areas previously left to the volition of local elites.

The RCG enjoyed some success in its first ten years of operation in the province. It reoriented towards Spain a large portion of the cacao trade that had gone to both Veracruz and Curaçao. Venezuela's economy grew during the company's tenure. More land came under cacao cultivation, and imports and exports rose. The company's military and commercial presence in the province had other consequences as well. Some reinforced the RCG's policies, some undermined them, and some fell outside of its domain. The governor and the city of Caracas saw the bureaucracy for handling smuggling cases expand, making the capital city even more important as a center for the storage and distribution of confiscated goods. In Valencia, the RCG managed to attract most of the export trade from Puerto Cabello's hinterland and its primary route to Valencia's interior valleys. Here the company's authority was not challenged, not only because of its patrols but also because local cacao cultivators and traders welcomed the presence of a regular buyer so close to their estates. Additionally, the RCG's limited effective authority in Valencia did not extend to the district's second route between the interior and the sea. The adjustment and in some cases expansion in Curaçao's trade in Venezuelan products by the end of the RCG's first decade in the province, one of the unintended consequences of monopoly, found specific expression in the increased importance of the Patanemo and Turiamo trails, along which tobacco from the provincial interior moved to Curaçaoan traders along the coast. The conflict over this trade was limited to the Valencia justices of the peace, the Valencia municipal elite, and their respective circles of extended family and clients.

The extension of the office of justice of the peace to towns in the provincial interior also produced partial successes from the Crown's point of view. In San Felipe centralization helped reinforce local autonomy, at least until 1740. Juan Angel de Larrea, the city's first justice of the peace, kept the RCG, the governor, the asiento, and the San Felipe municipal elite content by artfully balancing their respective interests. This political balancing act helped create space within which sanfelipeños could continue to trade with the Dutch but at the same time take advantage of the RCG's demand for agricultural products.

The Flexibility of Informality in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela

Such a knotty dynamic of smuggling and its repression, political centralization and the defense of local autonomy, and personal and institutional designs does not fit well with most historical work on eighteenth-century Venezuela. The historiography has been dominated by an obsession with independence and Simón Bolívar that tends to squeeze Venezuela's colonial past into a very narrow interpretive framework.¹¹ The search for precursors, origins, and budding elements of nationalist or anti-royalist sentiment has found that Venezuelan colonial subjects categorically rejected the company's presence in the province, that cabildos clashed interminably with the governor-appointed justices of the peace, and that cabildos experienced little or no internal conflict or with other municipal councils. The widespread and obdurate commitment to commercial exchange

¹¹ Others have made similar criticisms. In his study of Gabriel José de Zuloaga's governorship, Otto Pikaza refers to this obsession as hunting for daisies in the dung. Pikaza, *Don Gabriel José de Zuloaga*, p. 1. See also Miguel Izard, *Orejanos, cimarrones y arrochelados* (Barcelona: Sendai Ediciones, 1988), pp. 77-78; Ramón Aizpurua, "La historiografía colonial venezolana contemporánea: De la tradicional a la reciente," in his *Temas de historia colonial*, pp. 144-156; idem, "Otra cara de la resistencia: Venezuela en el siglo XVIII," in *Temas de historia colonial*, pp. 115-120; and Frédérique Langue, "Historiografía colonial de Venezuela, pautas, circunstancias y una pregunta: ¿También se fue la historiografía de la colonia detrás del caballo de Bolívar?," *Revista de Indias* 61:222 (2001), pp. 247-265.

with the Dutch of Curaçao is presented as either a manifestation of this conflictive spirit, or as one of the grounds that motivated it.¹²

This perspective simplifies to the point of obfuscation. The present study demonstrates that Venezuelan subjects and colonial political traditions showed a much greater receptiveness to new institutions as well as a resilience in integrating them into long-standing structures and practices. Even those reforms that were designed to limit local autonomy could be and were used for unintended ends. The RCG was not categorically rejected, the relationship between cabildo leadership and justices of the peace obeyed other dynamics besides the clash between local and central government, and the cabildos experienced internal conflict as well as serious differences with the political elite of neighboring districts. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that neither the RCG nor the governors in their respective, and sometimes coordinated, reforms sought to or were capable of dismantling fully the practices and connections they that intended to undermine or subordinate. The colonial state in Venezuela, as well as its commercial contractor, was satisfied with partial triumphs, the old Hapsburg strategy. Governors named justices of the peace knowing they would ingratiate themselves with local smuggling operations; the RCG supported local representatives and coastal patrols knowing that they would use their assignments to build personal fortunes or settle personal debts.

¹² Some examples of this include Germán Carrera Damas, *La crisis de la sociedad colonial* (Caracas: Facultad de Humanidades y Letras, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1971); Ladera de Diez, *Contribución al estudio de la aristocracia territorial*, pp. 33-51; Vaccari San Miguel, *Sobre gobernadores y residencias*, p. 15; Trujillo, *Motín y sublevación*, p. 15; Magallanes, *Luchas e insurrecciones*; Felice Cardot, *La rebelión de Andresote*, pp. 36-37, 97-98; idem, *Rebeliones, motines y movimientos de masas en el siglo XVIII venezolano* (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1961); Quintero, *El teniente justicia mayor*, pp. 344-346; and Ramón Díaz Vásquez, "Evolución social de Venezuela (hasta 1960)," in Mariano Picón Salas, Augusto Mijares, and Ramón Díaz Vásquez, *Venezuela independiente: Evolución político-social, 1810-1960* (Caracas: Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, 1975), pp. 196-199.

Just as the monopoly tendency extended from the Crown through the lowest cabo, so did the pragmatic acceptance of the limits of monopolistic claims and the expediency of compromise. The imperial state and its representatives in fact received some benefit from successful smuggling enterprises. Regular captures produced comisos trials and auctions, and the taxes, fees, and auction money collected brought revenues to the royal coffers. A drastic reduction in smuggling activity would lead to a corresponding decline in arrests and subsequently, a decline in comisos-generated revenues.

Unable to enforce the law evenly, consistently, or sometimes with any effect at all, the aim was not necessarily to eliminate extra-legal trade but more to keep it within the confines of the social order—limiting strife and keeping the colonial peace. Monopoly tendencies in smuggling could and did help to produce the stability that the Crown pursued in its outwardly inconsistent policies. A recognized and respected monopoly, no matter its legal status, could and sometimes did reduce confrontations over coveted and limited resources. The breakdown of monopolies could and did lead to the heightened competition, often openly violent, feared by the Crown because it threatened to expose the weakness of these contradictory arrangements. For example, the 1740 San Felipe uprising developed from the struggle to fill the power vacuum created by De Larrea's death.¹³

For governors who lacked the power to undermine regional, municipally based, or family-based monopolies on extra-legal trade, it was better to have an ally or even better

¹³ For discussions of the intentional and unintentional support states give organized crime, see Thomas C. Schelling, "Economics and Criminal Enterprise;" idem "What is the Business of Organized Crime?," *Journal of Public Law* 20 (1971), pp. 71-84; idem, *Choice and Consequence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); Marx, "Ironies of Social Control;" Andreas, "When Policies Collide;" and Heyman and Smart, "States and Illegal Practices."

a client in charge than someone unknown or antagonistic. This helps explain the tensions between Nirgua and Caracas. In the district of Nirgua, the cabos assigned to carry out coastal patrols tended to align themselves with the RCG while the cabildo, in contrast, went its own way. The justices of the peace in this instance were a critical wild card, especially those who could mobilize people in the district. But they usually did not have the same influence over local inhabitants as the cabildo officers, as the justices often came from neighboring districts or even Spain. The governor, fearing increased nirgüño power through the consolidation of political titles and roles, did not dare to name a nirgüño to the post. Alone, with little backing and normally excluded from the off-the-books operations of the San Felipe patrols and the Puerto Cabello-based RCG officials, the Nirgua justices of the peace tended to, or ended up, collaborating with the nirgüños.

Outsiders responded to the cohesiveness achieved by Nirgua's municipal leadership with racially charged rhetoric that demonized all residents of the district. Governors and others portrayed Nirgua's autonomy as threat. Other cabildos, like Valencia's for example, did not develop such a negative and simplistic reputation. While in the case of Nirgua cabildo autonomy and perceived pardo unity produced external fears of district-wide disloyalty, in Valencia the wild card was the slave population along the coast. In many of Valencia's coastal valleys slaves successfully ignored or worked around trading restrictions imposed by colonial authority, but they did not produce the kind of cohesive, cross-valley, regional position that the Nirgua folks were feared to be capable of achieving. Nirgua's free black majority and political elite was perceived as a much greater threat.¹⁴

¹⁴ For discussions of elite anxieties over free blacks in eighteenth-century Venezuela, see Miguel Izard, *El miedo a la revolución*; idem "Ni cuatrerros ni montoneros, llaneros;" Yolanda Texera Arnal, "Médicos y

The most powerful institutions in Valencia—the RCG at Puerto Cabello and the cabildo and justices of the peace based in the district capital—concentrated their energies on securing the limited control they exercised over small but lucrative routes within the jurisdiction. Neither made the effort to secure much influence over the numerous small smuggling operations based out of each of Valencia's coastal valleys. Instead, they were satisfied so long as their respective routes proved profitable and no threatening competition developed. They struggled to implement the vertical and horizontal monopoly over production, transport, and exchange within these limited spaces.

The colony's prevailing juridical and jurisdictional pluralism, under which multiple legal regimes coexisted and often overlapped, forced colonial subjects to respond to or mobilize a variety of legal arguments and authorities sometimes simultaneously.¹⁵ Loyalty to the Spanish Crown was the one common denominator among these various regimes and the individuals involved in them. The sovereignty of the monarch was never questioned, and although many individuals and groups engaged in legal arguments and strategies for conflicting purposes, they all did so claiming that what they were doing was in the best interest of the Crown. As colonial institutions and the rhetoric of the enforcement of colonial legal codes were often used to further personal ambitions, the key conceptual union achieved through and reinforced by these actions was between

cirujanos pardos 'en condición de por ahora' en la Provincia de Venezuela, siglo XVIII," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 8:3 (1999), pp. 321-338; and George Reid Andrews, "Spanish American Independence: A Structural Analysis," *Latin American Perspectives* 12:1 (1985), pp. 105-132. For a contrasting perspective on pardos in late colonial Venezuela, compare P. Michael McKinley, *Pre-Revolutionary Caracas: Politics, Economy, and Society, 1777-1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 57, 115-125. It should be noted that many of the slaves on coastal cacao estates who traded with Dutch merchants and sea captains did so with the tacit approval of estate overseers, managers, and owners.

¹⁵ For legal pluralism in European overseas colonies before the nineteenth century, see Benton, "Colonial Law and Cultural Difference; and idem, *Law and Colonial Cultures*.

personal and royal interests. The Crown in Spain and the governors in Caracas took advantage of this as best they could, preferring a colonial administrative presence and the enforcement of colonial policy built on personalism and informality over none at all.¹⁶

Crown subjects in the Province of Venezuela sought to reconcile and maximize multiple rules of law by combining them. The most successful smuggling operations secured protection from as many of these regimes as possible. Colonial officials involved in smuggling achieved these combinations through the accumulation of administrative titles and jurisdictional authorities. Smugglers outside of colonial government made sure their friends, family members, patrons, or clients exercised these offices. The justices of peace in Valencia, for example, secured for themselves the position of corregidor of the district's Indian towns and thereby guaranteed access to and a degree of control over resources and spaces unavailable to rival authorities in the area. Don Diego de Matos enjoyed various titles and responsibilities besides that of Juez General de Comisos for the province. Don Juan de Larrea perhaps achieved the most successful combination of duties and titles during the period studied. In contrast to Matos, De Larrea was more effective in building an enduring system of colonial administration, patronage, and elimination of competitors because he did not overextend himself. By restricting his activities to the Yaracuy River valley, where he enjoyed uncontested political predominance, De Larrea avoided exposing his various enterprises to rival systems of patronage and law enforcement.

Still, De Larrea's apparently solid operation quickly fell to pieces once the patron was gone. De Larrea's power to enforce Crown policy along the Yaracuy River, his

¹⁶ This argument is not new. See, for example, Frederick B. Pike, "The Municipality and the System of Checks and Balances in Spanish Colonial Administration," *The Americas* 15 (1958), pp. 139-158.

ability to direct extra-legal trade, and the respect given him and the offices he held grew out of his ability to deliver protection, favors, and relatively stable and predictable conditions for transport and trade as the head of a broad network of friends, clients, and extended family members. Colonial administrators and smugglers alike relied upon their real and fictive kin, friends, dependents, and sometimes human property. Justices of the peace like Felipes in Valencia and De Larrea in San Felipe, like the governors in Caracas, turned to the same wedding of royal service, personal aggrandizement, and the mutual obligations of extended family and patron-client relations to fortify advantaged positions in legal trade, extra-legal trade, and the elimination of competitors. The two major reforms in colonial administration—the RCG's monopoly trade contract and the expansion of the office of justice of the peace—did not undermine this dynamic. In fact, they depended on it, just as smugglers did.

Successful smuggling enterprises formed part of these systems of service, protection, and patronage. The ideal smuggling operation in early eighteenth-century Venezuela showed vertical and horizontal integration of production, transportation, taxation, and protection of extra-legal goods. Smugglers or their trusted allies owned or controlled these resources from the site of production to the place of export or in the case of imports, from their point of entry to their final point of consumption. The largest, most powerful operations included control over key border crossings and passes, well-established *prácticos* who guaranteed the movement of goods across imperial boundaries, and beyond the province, representatives on Curaçao, other Caribbean ports, and across the Atlantic in Cádiz, the Canary Islands, Guipuzcoa, and Amsterdam.

Within the Province of Venezuela, geography facilitated the exercise of advantage along key routes, yet inhibited monopolization of terrestrial control over smuggling across districts or regions. It was easier to develop controls over the movement of goods and people between the interior valleys and the coast than it was between coastal valleys. This study identifies five corridors along which monopoly control over trade was partially achieved: the routes that joined Caracas and La Guaira, Valencia and Patanemo and Turiamo, Valencia and Puerto Cabello, Nirgua and Punta Morón, and San Felipe with the mouth of the Yaracuy River. Besides a small number of *prácticos*, only the Royal Guipuzcoa Company and Curaçaoan traders regularly crossed over regional and jurisdictional divides, and this they did at sea.¹⁷

The exception is the Capuchin mission system, which did not depend so heavily on protection rackets. All the other successful smuggling operations identified in this study included an important repressive element. All others included members of the civic administration who actively persecuted smugglers, more often than not rivals, or traders who operated without protection. In contrast, the Capuchins secured the safety and impunity of their activities by other means and through other channels. The isolation of some of their llanos missions helped, as they could move resources between their coastal and inland missions to safeguard them from civil and clerical authorities. They did, of course, have powerful backers. As the Church authority responsible for appointing the Caracas bishopric's representative on Curaçao, the bishop would have had some degree of involvement in the missions' trade through Curaçao, and as the chapter on San Felipe demonstrates, the clergymen on the island were fundamental middlemen in joining the

¹⁷ The RCG's *patrullas volantes*, although they crossed municipal bounds in their terrestrial patrols and pursuits, restricted their activities to a strip of coastline between Coro and Puerto Cabello.

Capuchins' mission-based smuggling operation with the Dutch Atlantic and Caribbean systems of commodity transport and exchange. The ecclesiastical fuero helped insulate Capuchin activities, as did the legally sanctioned and generally recognized need to supply the missions either through the purchase of goods outside the mission system or their transfer within it.

Some friars played larger roles in the Capuchins' extra-legal trade in cacao and tobacco than others. Friar Marcelino de San Vicente stood out for his efforts to build the coastal missions in San Felipe. Some had closer contacts along the coast and on Curaçao, and others earned extra cash through the mule trains and canoes they owned personally. Nonetheless, the Capuchins' commercial ventures did not depend exclusively on the talents of individual friars. The mission system itself had solid foundations across the province, deep into the llanos, and west into New Granada. It could withstand the loss of an extraordinary friar like San Vicente or even the loss of the profitable Mission San Francisco Javier because it could make adjustments to redirect the flows of products and people.

The rivalry over legal and extra-legal trade within the province moved from localized, mutual accusations of involvement with Curaçaoan traders to widespread condemnation of a serious threat to social order when, as in the case of the Capuchins, the enterprise proved resistant to external attempts to debilitate it or refused to integrate outsiders. The Capuchins were happy to carry sanfelipeño cacao growers' product down river for them, but they had no interest in making them equal partners in their business. The unified front maintained by the Nirgua cabildo also made its members and nirgüños associated with them the subject of constant accusations as to their relations with the

Dutch and slurs as to their loyalty to the Crown. The rhetorical attacks against the Capuchins and the Nirgua municipal elite did not necessarily translate into success in dismantling what was presented as a menace.

Other threats were eliminated quickly and often with consensus among colonial authorities and local elites. There were times when the laws against trading with foreigners were applied fully, sometimes to the letter with regards to the severe punishments outlined by the Crown. This happened when a smuggler or smuggling operation ignored or lacked respect for authorities. Individuals who operated outside the bounds of colonial law without the protection of colonial authorities or individuals or families with influence over colonial authorities exposed themselves to persecution. Often authorities took time off from competing with each other to eliminate a common threat. Mild penalties nudged those caught towards seeking protection in the future; harsh penalties were reserved for those who showed themselves disinclined to do this or were of social insignificance. Harsh treatment was also reserved for cases that threatened to expose the weakness of the colonial regime, either to groups within the colony considered dangerous or to foreign powers, especially during times of war.

Smuggling: A Colonial Cultural Legacy?

In recent years students of Venezuela's past and present have turned their attention to impunity, corruption, abuse of power, and clientism as the Venezuelan petrostate's distributive powers have faltered and its lure has declined. Some repeat—at times with chagrin, other times with pride, and usually with an unresolved tension between the two—a platitude that claims that a disjunction between the dictates of law and the actions of the individual is intrinsic to Venezuelan politics, society, and culture. By guile or by force, Venezuelans tend to undermine, circumvent, or snub the rules which members of

society are expected to respect. Many claim this rebellious spirit dates from the colonial period. They add that the smuggling that was so well entrenched in colonial Venezuela served as the foundation for this disposition towards informality.¹⁸

If the origins of informality, improvisation, and personalism in Venezuelan political culture are to be found in the colonial past and specifically in extra-legal trade, much work must be done to connect the past and the present. Various points that serve as the basis for sweeping claims are assumed and not proven. Scholars would be wise to restrain from making such statements until the theoretical and empirical work connecting the colonial past to the present has been done. Three major problems merit attention. This study has attempted to address one.

First, if indeed smuggling in colonial Venezuela involved wide societal participation that cut across lines of socioeconomic class, ethnicity, color, and regional differences, when did this pervasiveness take root? What are the origins of widespread

¹⁸ For arguments about the connection between eighteenth-century smuggling and contemporary Caribbean and Venezuelan culture, see, for example, Ramón Díaz Vázquez, "Evolución social de Venezuela," p. 196; and Feliciano Ramos, *El contrabando inglés*, p. 378. For informality and the exercise of state power in contemporary Venezuela, see Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Fernando Coronil, *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); and idem "Magical Illusions or Revolutionary Magic? Chávez in Historical Context," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 33:6 (2000), pp. 34-42. For a discussion of what states claim to do and what they actually do do, see Coronil's "Smelling Like a Market," *American Historical Review* 106:1 (2001), pp. 119-129. For rising concerns over corruption, see Rogelio Pérez Perdomo, "Corruption and Political Crisis," in Louis W. Goodman et al., eds., *Lessons of the Venezuelan Experience* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995), pp. 311-333; Louis W. Goodman et al., "Introduction: The Decline of Venezuelan Exceptionalism," in Goodman et al., eds., *Lessons of the Venezuelan Experience*, pp. 3-27; and Ruth Capriles Méndez, editor, *Diccionario de la corrupción en Venezuela*, 2 volumes (Caracas: Consorcio de Ediciones Capriles, 1989-1990). Though the importance of informality is acknowledged, ethnographic work on the subject remains to be done. For example, Kitner, in her study of fishing communities on Margarita Island, writes, "Nothing gets done without paying someone a little extra, or claiming kinship links to extract a favor. This subject could easily be the entire focus of this study, but it is not." Kathi R. Kitner, "The Veneer of Modernity: Tourism and Cultural Transformation on Isla Margarita, Venezuela" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1996), p. 211. See also Luis A. Bravo Dávila, *Cambio social, criminalidad y control del crimen en Margarita (1960-1968)* (Caracas: Consejo de Desarrollo Científico y Humano, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1993); and Lisa Redfield Peattie, *The View from the Barrio* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), pp. 52, 57-62. For a wider discussion of colonial legacies, see Jeremy Adelman, ed., *Colonial Legacies: The Problem of Persistence in Latin American History* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

extra-legal trade in colonial Venezuela? As with the rest of the Spanish Caribbean, smuggling's consolidation as a regular commercial practice can be traced to the lengthy period of isolation, during which time the colonies of the Audiencia de Santo Domingo were left to fend for themselves. For Venezuela the last quarter of the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century were critical, for this was when the Atlantic boom and corresponding reorientations of transatlantic trade thrust Curaçao into the prominent role it enjoyed in the eighteenth-century Caribbean. Curaçao found in Venezuela's growing cacao economy, which also responded to the major changes in the Atlantic economy, a nice fit.

The second big problem is getting from regular trade with Dutch traders from Curaçao in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the present. What relationship, if any, exists between colonial and contemporary informality? How have commercial and other forms of informality been maintained and reshaped over the *longue durée*? Which forms have ceased to exist? If a structured cultural practice has endured over time, made and remade in new contexts, incorporating new elements yet retaining throughout a consistent principle or conceptual notion, then one should be able to identify the biggest, most salient moments when a practice is reshaped and follow them through their respective cycles. Certain features of Venezuela's economy and its relationship with the state have persisted since the eighteenth century, primary among them the dominance of extractive industries directed to overseas markets. The agricultural and primary products exports sector of the Venezuelan economy has been pegged on the fortunes of

monoculture for the last three-hundred years: cacao in the eighteenth century, coffee in the nineteenth century, and oil in the twentieth century.¹⁹

This study takes the first issue as a given and leaves the second for the future. It assumes that in the seventeenth century colonial subjects in Venezuela formed, in their interactions with the Dutch and with each other, the commercial practices and the inclinations that became fixed or generalized by the early eighteenth century, the period under consideration. The second problem requires basic work on key periods in Venezuelan history to be done first before any longitudinal statements can be made with any confidence and which would avoid the kinds of ahistorical platitudes that have dominated discussions of the subject so far. This leads the third problem. This study attempts to provide such a building block: it traces the adjustments in informal trading systems in the face of major changes in imperial policy. It also places these systems within a framework of power and struggles over social order so as to better understand the unequal influence different individuals and social groups exercised in these enterprises. It demonstrates the resilience of informal trade and informality as a basis for political power.

Friends, Foes, Strangers, and Opportune Enforcement

Graciela Soriano de García-Pelayo's comments on what she identifies as Venezuelans' lack of an institutional mind reinforce a stark contrast between the personal and the formal. The image of the ticket counter and the buddy in the backroom

¹⁹ For a discussion of the economic continuities between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see John V. Lombardi, "La invención de Venezuela en el marco del sistema mundial: El siglo de transición, 1750-1850" *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* 83:332 (2002), pp. 5-33. For continuities between the Venezuelan oil industry and colonial extractive economies, see Lombardi, "Prologue: Venezuela's Permanent Dilemma," in Steve Ellner and Daniel Hellinger, eds., *Venezuelan Politics in the Chávez Era: Class, Polarization, and Conflict* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), pp. 1-6; and Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty*, pp. 23-43.

eloquently depicts the quotidian implications of complicated societal dynamics like the relationship between the public and the private. Nonetheless, it does not do justice to the subtle ways Venezuelans, past and present, identify and maneuver the delicate and complicated bonds between what are, in the opinion of many like Soriano de García-Pelayo, separate and as a rule conflicting domains. This study has attempted to show that in eighteenth-century Venezuela the mobilization of personal and institutional resources, the participation in legal and extra-legal trade, and the irregular application of the law were not contradictory strategies. The law and juridical procedures were tools that were fortified by other colonial institutions and practices. The mobilization of friends, family, patrons, and clients gave weak institutions clout, and it was through these personal obligations, loyalties, and preferences that those charged with the duties of public office achieved at least some of the effect for which the institution was designed. Colonial officials gave special consideration to consanguinity and patronage when weighing the application of regulations. The most powerful developed elaborate systems of favorites, dependents, and backers. And even though these systems crumbled once the patron departed, the union of personal and institutional remained intact as the framework for mobilization for future generations.

APPENDIX GLOSSARY

- achagues*: aches, pains, general maladies
aguardiente: cane alcohol
aguardiente de Canarias: brandy produced in the Canary Islands
alambique: still for making alcohol
alcabala: sales tax
alcalde de la Santa Hermandad: municipal civil guardian of legal and social order, in charge of the rural areas, whereas the *alcaldes ordinarios* were in charge of urban areas; the Holy Brotherhood
alcalde ordinario: annually elected judge of the municipal council
alférez: standard-bearer for the municipal council, senior regidor
alforja: saddlebag
alguacil: municipal constable
alhaja: jewel, gem, precious stone
almacén: warehouse
almojarifazgo: tax on imports and exports
almud: one-twelfth of a fanega, roughly 8 to 9.5 pounds
anclote: grapnel, kedge
angaripola: calico
apoderado: agent, representative, or proxy
apolillado: moth-eaten
arancel: official price list or schedule
arrendador: concessionaire who holds the rights to operate or supervise a tax
arribada: a forced landing of a ship or boat, for various reasons including lack of water, rough seas, severe damage to the vessel, or flight from persecution
arribada maliciosa: faked forced landing, often used as a cover for smuggling
arriero: mule skinner
arroba: unit of measure, roughly 25 pounds, 11.5 kilos
asentista: holder of the *asiento*, contractor
asiento: monopoly contract to supply slaves to Spain's American colonies
audiencia: court and governing body under the viceroyalty, as well as the area under its jurisdiction
auto: administrative act or order
averiado: damaged
averiguación: judicial inquiry
ayudante: assistant
ayuntamiento: municipal government, mayorship, town council
balandra: single-masted coastal sailing vessel, sloop

bando: proclamation
barlovento: windward
barragán: in English, barragan or camlet, rich cloth of Asian origin, supposed to have been made of camel's hair and silk, and later made of goat's hair and silk or other combination
barreta: garment for covering the head; lining of a shoe
bayeta: baize, a sort of flannel
boca: chutes cut into a river bank to facilitate small water craft entrance and exit; also the mouth of a river
bodega: small grocery store or storehouse
bodeguero: owner or operator of a small grocery store
botijuela: earthenware jug
bozal: unacculturated slave, often African born
bretaña: a fine linen known as bretagnes or britannias
bubas: pustules, inguinal swellings, often associated with bubonic plague or syphilis

cabeza de esclavo: accounting term used in the Spanish American slave trade
cabildo: municipal council
cabo: corporal, usually the subordinate of the *teniente de justicia mayor*
cabo a guerra: low-ranking appointee in the colonial administration, often with defensive duties
cabo de cruz: I assume an altered *cruzado* coin, see *peso de barra*
caja: strongbox, treasury
caja de guerra: military drum, call to arms
camino real: royal road
caño: spring
capítulo: chapter, council meeting or congress
carga: a load, according to Ferry (1989:325) this would be 1.5 fanegas of cacao; also a treasury deposit, see *descarga*
cargador: porter; individual in charge of loading a ship
carne del norte: jerky
casa real: royal house, public building where Crown affairs conducted
castellano: commander of a fort or castle
coleta: also *coletto*, doublet or jerkin
comandante general: supreme military commander in a jurisdiction
comisionario: commissioner, steward
comiso: confiscation in general or the confiscated goods themselves
composición: legalization of a possession obtained irregularly, usually through a fee; also the purchase of a license
confesión: confession
corregidor: colonial official in charge of an Indian town
criollo: creole, individual born in the New World
crudo: lienzo *crudo*, unbleached linen; packing or wrapping cloth
cuchillejo: also *cuchillo*, triangular or tapering piece of cloth sown into a garment
cuchillo: see *cuchillejo*; more commonly, a knife or dagger
culebra: worm, spiral part of a still; more commonly, a snake

curandero: medicine man, folk healer

chupa: waistcoat, jacket

descamino: contraband confiscation on land

descarga: treasury withdrawal, see *carga*

diezmo: church tithe of 10% annually

don, doña: lord or lady, person of distinction

enagua: see *nagua*

encarnado: incarnate; red in color

factor: representative, agent

factoría: factorage, agency

fanega: a measure, roughly 110 to 116 pounds in the case of cacao from Caracas

fiador: bondsman

fiscal: prosecutor

flete: freightage, carriage

flota: fleet that sailed from between Spain and Veracruz

frasco: flask, bottle with a narrow neck

frasquera: bottle-case, liquor-case

fuero: official privilege or right

futura: money paid to the Crown to secure an official position

gálico: syphilis

galón: galloon, a texture of silk, thread, gold, or silver; lace

gobernador: governor

goleta: small, two-masted ship

grandes cacaos: the Caracas-based landed elite of colonial Venezuela, see *mantuano*

groote vaart: Curaçao's transatlantic trade; compare *kleine vaart*

guía: permission, one-time issued license to travel, trade, or do both

hacienda: estate, plantation, usually a cacao estate ("hacienda de cacao")

holán: cambric (finely woven white linen or cotton fabric; originally from Cambria, France) or batiste (fine, plain-woven fabric made from various fibers, used especially for clothing; originally from Cambria, France)

holandilla: lead-colored, glazed linen, used for linings

indulto: pardon, reprieve

ingenio: sugar mill

isleño: person from the Canary Islands

jabeque: in English, xebec, a small three-mast vessel (from the Mediterranean) with square and triangular sails, can also be used with oars, usually for coastal travel

juez de comisos: colonial official assigned to investigate and pass judgement on commercial transgressions

kleine vaart: Curaçao's Caribbean transit trade; compare *grote vaart*

ladino: Spanish-speaking or acculturated Indian or slave

legua: league; according to Ferry (1989:326), in Caracas, about 5.7 km

libra: pound

listado: striped, listed, striped checks, plaid

listadillo: cotton cloth striped white and blue; striped gingham

llanos: plains, in Venezuela, used to refer to the extensive plains of the country's southern region

madrina de mulas: lead mare

maestre: mate of a merchant ship

maestre de campo: field marshal

mantuano: member of the elite of colonial Caracas, see *grandes cacao*s

mayordomo: overseer or manager

mandador: slave driver, usually a slave

matalotaje: expenses paid to muleteers or freight charges generally

maravedí: monetary unit; 34th part of a real

mochila: knapsack, commonly of leather

moneda macuquina: coin with the milled edges cut away; debased coinage

monte: mountains, uncultivated or unused lands

mulato, mulata: mulatto, offspring of black and white parents

muleque: black boy

nagua: also *enagua*, petticoat

navío: ship, especially a large one, or a ship of war

olán: see *holán*

olandilla: see *holandilla*

pañuelo: handkerchief, scarf, shawl

papelón: muscovado sugar

pardo: person of mixed ancestry, most often African and European

pasquín: poster, lampoon

patrulla volante: mobile patrol

pena de cámara: fine

pendencia: quarrel, dispute, feud

peninsular: an individual born in Spain

peón: foot soldier, estate worker

perito: connoisseur; appraiser of goods, or expert in general

pesa (romana): scale

peso: monetary unit, silver coin worth 8 reales

peso de barra: I assume an altered Mexican peso, see *cabo de cruz*

peso de carga: one-peso transport fee

petaca: trunk or chest covered with hides or leather

pieza: piece of cloth woven at one time

pieza de Indias: in slave trade accounting, a male between 15 and 40 years of age, without physical defects; women and children were calculated as fractions of a *pieza*

pipa: cask for wine or other liquors; a pipe, the liquid measure of two hogsheads; measure of a city water supply

piragua: small vessel, a pirogue

platilla: Silesian linen or silesia (smooth linen fabric first made in Silesia; or, twilled cotton fabric used in linings); thin and course linen

potrero: site for grazing or wintering mules and horses

práctico: pilot; experienced person

presa: contraband confiscation at sea

presidio: garrison, fortress

pueblo doctrina: Indian town in transition from *pueblo de misiones* to *pueblo de indios*

pueblo de indios: Indian town served by secular clergy

pueblo de misiones: Indian town served by regular clergy

pulpería: a retail grocery store

pulpero: proprietor of a retail grocery store

punta: point of land, headland

quintal: measurement of weight, just over 100 pounds

rasilla, rasillo: serge

real: monetary unit, one-eighth of a peso

real cédula: royal decree

real orden: decrees issued by ministers in the colonial administration in the name of the monarch

real provisión: decree issued by Spanish tribunals in the name of the monarch

regidor: cabildo member

relación: report, account

rezago: remainder, residue, used to refer to houses and other structures used to store commodities, i.e., *casa de rezago*

residencia: judicial review of an outgoing colonial official, normally conducted by his successor

rochela: maroon settlement, isolated hiding place in general; rowdy party, din

ruán: sort of cotton linen, stamped in colors, originally made in Rouen, France, then a more general term

sayasaya: sayal, a course woollen sack, or sackcloth

sello: seal, stamp

sitio: site, unincorporated settlement

tafetán: taffeta

tarasca: serpent figure carried in Corpus Christi procession, indicating the triumph of Christ over the devil; crooked, ugly, ill-natured, licentious, and impudent woman

teniente de justicia mayor: justice of the peace, governor's representative at the district level

tercio: a third; military squadron

tornaguía: license for a return trip, confirmation of receipt, exchange, or sale

trato forzado: forced exchange

trueco: barter

trueque: barter

urca: cargo ship

vara: measurement, about 33 inches; also the staff of office

viscaíno: person from the Basque province of Viscaya; in eighteenth-century Venezuela, used to identify Basques in general

vecino: property-holding and voting citizen of a municipality

visita: tour of inspection

visitador: inspector

yegua: mare

yegua de vientre: breeding mare

zambo: person of mixed African and Indian ancestry

zurrón: about 100 pounds; large leather sack

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliographical Essay

The study draws on previously unexamined primary sources from archives in Caracas, Venezuela. Many of the issues, institutions, conflicts, and individuals discussed generated colonial bureaucratic records on both sides of the Atlantic. In the Old World, these records would accumulate in the centers of Spanish imperial power of Seville, Madrid, and Valladolid; in the Basque province of Guipuzcoa, home of the Royal Guipuzcoa Company of Caracas; in the Canary Islands, from where many ships, supplies, and people set out for the Province of Venezuela; and in the Dutch city of Amsterdam, the metropolitan hub for commercial and military activity on the island of Curaçao. In the New World, other sites of documentary accumulation besides the Venezuelan capital include the Viceregal capitals of Mexico and Bogotá; the Audiencia of Santo Domingo; and regional archives in what were then the autonomous provinces of Maracaibo, Margarita, Trinidad, New Andalusia, and Guyana and what now form part of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Comprehensive coverage of the commercial circuits and social networks that crossed the Province of Venezuela would call for consultation in these other archives. This study does not aim to be exhaustive; instead, it serves as an initial step towards understanding the formation of local patterns of extra-legal exchange within international systems of commodity production, transportation, and trade.

The study relies heavily on criminal proceedings known in the eighteenth century as "casos de comisos" and housed today in the colonial wing (Sección La Colonia) of the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) in Caracas. Throughout the focus has been on cases involving the terrestrial movement of imported goods from Curaçao or exports from Venezuela. Nevertheless, the Comisos section of the Sección La Colonia incorporated a wider range of violations of Crown commercial policies. Cases recorded in Comisos went beyond the furtive trade with foreigners. They included the possession and sale of proscribed imports and the production, transportation, and sale of commodities banned from internal consumption, like cane alcohol, as well as the untaxed import of slaves through unapproved ports. The study uses comisos cases from the years 1693 to 1757. Comisos has a total of 36 volumes that span the period 1691 to 1822. In addition to Comisos cases, much information comes from the royal treasury's Caracas account books. These Real Hacienda volumes contain various internal divisions. Those used here, in order of importance, are Comisos, Penas de Cámara, and Composición de Negros de Mala Entrada. The first logs deposits that resulted from the auction of confiscated goods, the second fines for various infractions or payments made to adjust prison sentences, and the third fees paid to bring into good legal standing irregularly imported or purchased human property.

The AGN has other sections with copious information on clandestine trading activities. The Diversos books are a useful source as well, though I have used them

scantly. Diversos includes the materials its name implies: the volumes contain a wide variety of civil and criminal proceedings, inquiries, reports, and complaints, filed chronologically. This study, as mentioned above, concentrates on overland activities: both smuggling and efforts to repress it. Another vast source for clandestine trade in eighteenth-century Venezuela is the AGN's 47 volumes organized under the title of *Compañía Guipuzcoana*. The materials range temporally from 1726 to 1799, with most documents dating from the 1760s through 1780s. The volumes document the company's coastal patrols' captures of smuggling crafts on the Caribbean Sea or in Venezuelan ports.

Instructions, orders, and inquiries from the Crown with regards to extra-legal trade are found in three sections: Reales Cédulas, Reales Ordenes and Reales Provisiones. The governors' correspondence with the Crown, audiencia and viceregal officials, and the Consejo de Indias are collected in *Gobernación y Capitanía General*.

A variety of sections within the Sección La Colonia at the AGN have informed the discussion of the conflicts and adjustments within the colonial administration. Empleados de la Colonia and Ayuntamientos include information on administrative appointments, the auction of public offices, municipal elections, and disputes within cabildos, between cabildos, and between cabildos and the provincial government. Materials collected in the Misiones section illuminated the secularization process for the Capuchins' coastal missions in San Felipe. These as well as all the other components within the Sección La Colonia are summarized in María Luisa Herrera de Weishaar and Carmen Alida Soto's *Guía del Archivo General de la Nación* (Caracas: Archivo General de la Nación, 1984).

The materials from the Registro Principal del Distrito Federal are currently divided between the AGN and the Archivo de la Academia Nacional de la Historia de Venezuela (AANHV). I have used two Registro sections from the AANHV. Civiles incorporates a great variety of civil judicial proceedings, including formal and informal complaints, criminal inquiries and investigations, and trial records. Judiciales, formerly known as Cajas Negras, contains similar materials as well as others, since it served the same purpose as the AGN's Diversos. As with Diversos, chronology is the only organizing principle for both Civiles and Judiciales, although the academy's Departamento de Investigaciones has a very helpful computer data base that includes case titles, dates, places of origin, and key words.

At the Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Caracas, the Judiciales section proved useful for tracing the disputes over the Capuchins' coastal missions. The section also contains cases involving civil and clerical violations of Church doctrine on public and private conduct. In many of the cases, accusations of smuggling, infidelity, bigamy, and unruly behavior are combined. Conflicts and exchanges between civil and Church authorities are also found here. There are two guides for the archdioceses' archival collections: Jaime Suriá's *Catálogo general del Archivo Arquidiocesano de Caracas* (Madrid: Escuelas Profesionales Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, 1964) and Carmen Alida Soto Castellanos and María Luisa Herrera de Weishaar's *Guía al Archivo Arquidiocesano de Caracas* (Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1996). I have relied mainly on the latter.

Smuggling is not one of colonial Latin American historiography's main concerns. Many of the general histories recognize the importance of repeated violations of imperial

trade regulations, especially along the edges of empire in places like the River Plate, Central America, Florida, and the Caribbean. The acknowledgment of the prevalence of this and other trespasses, such as tax evasion, nepotism, and peculation—acts that today might be labeled abuse of power, corruption, or even organized crime—has not led to concerted efforts to develop an integrated approach to commercial and political transgressions. The current move within the historiography towards greater attention to culture, intimacy, the formation of gender, ethnic, and racial identities, the spectacle of the state, and the discursive manifestations of all of the above has not taken much interest in commercial transgression and its relation to the exercise of state power.

The work on smuggling is scattered. A long-standing concern has been with international rivalries, usually on the high seas, and the diplomatic wranglings to settle these conflicts. These would include George H. Nelson's "Contraband Trade Under the Asiento, 1730-1739" (1945), Engel Sluiter's "Dutch-Spanish Rivalry in the Caribbean Area, 1594-1609" (1948), Hector R. Feliciano Ramos' *El contrabando inglés en el Caribe y el Golfo de México (1748-1778)* (1990), Jesús Varela Marcos, *Las Salinas de Araya y el origen de la Armada de Barlovento* (1980), Rafael Cartay Angulo, *Ideología, desarrollo e interferencias del comercio caribeño durante el siglo XVIII* (1988); and Celestino Andrés Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe durante la primera mitad del siglo XVIII* (1984).

A small handful of scholars have taken seriously the recognition of smuggling's fundamental role in shaping colonial societies on the periphery. These include for Central America, Murdo MacLeod, *Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History, 1520-1720* (1973); for the River Plate, Zacarías Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial en el siglo XVII: Buenos Aires, el Atlántico y el espacio peruano* (1988) and "Power, Corruption, and Commerce: The Making of the Local Administrative Structure of Seventeenth-Century Buenos Aires" (1988); for the Argentine interior, Jeremy D. Stahl, "Production, Commerce, and Transportation in a Regional Economy: Tucumán, 1776-1801" (1994); for the Atlantic coast of New Granada, G. Earl Sanders, "Counter-Contraband in Spanish America, Handicaps of the Governors of the Indies" (1977), Lance Grahn, *The Political Economy of Smuggling: Regional Informal Economies in Early Bourbon New Granada* (1997) and "An Insoluble Dilemma: Smuggling in New Granada, 1713-1763" (1990); for the Chocó gold frontier in New Granada, William Frederick Sharp, *Slavery on the Spanish Frontier: The Colombian Chocó, 1680-1810* (1976); for Jamaica, Nuala Zahedieh, "The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655-1692" (1986) and "Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in Early English Jamaica, 1655-1689" (1986); for Saint Domingue, Paul Garrigus, "Blue and Brown: Contraband Indigo and the Rise of a Free Coloured Planter Class in French Saint-Domingue" (1993); for Santo Domingo, Carlos Esteban Deive, *Tangomangos: Contrabando y piratería en Santo Domingo, 1522-1606* (1996) and Michiel Baud, "A Colonial Counter Economy: Tobacco Production on Española, 1500-1870" (1991); and for Venezuela, Ramón Aizpurua Aguirre, *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas* (1993) and *Temas de historia colonial de Venezuela y del Caribe* (1996), Wim Klooster, *Illicit Riches* (1998), and Robert J. Ferry, "La esclavitud, el contrabando y los tenientes de justicia: Control del interior de Caracas en el siglo XVIII" (1985).

If historians have given little attention to the issue, they can perhaps feel heartened when they consider the challenges of studying extra-legal trade

archaeologically and their archaeologist peers' meager advances. Smuggling has eluded material culture analysis, although there have been some exceptions: for Hispaniola, see Kathleen Deagan's "After Columbus: The Sixteenth-Century Spanish-Caribbean Frontier" (1995) and Kathleen Deagan and Elizabeth J. Reitz's "Merchants and Cattlemen: The Archaeology of a Commercial Structure at Puerto Real" (1995); for St. Eustatius, see Edwin Dethlefsen's "The Historical Archaeology of St. Eustatius" (1982), Edwin Dethlefsen, Stephen J. Gluckman, R. Duncan Mathewson, and Norman Barka's "Archaeology on St. Eustatius: The Pompeii of the New World" (1982), and Norman F. Barka's "Citizens of St. Eustatius, 1781: A Historical and Archaeological Study" (1996); for Jamaica, see Robert F. Marx's *Pirate Port: The Story of the Sunken City of Port Royal* (1967), Philip Mayes' *Port Royal, Jamaica: Excavations, 1969-1970* (1972), and Philip Mayes and P.A. Mayes' "Port Royal, Jamaica: The Archaeological Problems and Potential" (1972); for Puerto Rico, see J.W. Joseph and Stephen C. Bryne's "Socio-Economics and Trade in Viejo San Juan, Puerto Rico: Observations from the Ballajá Archaeological Project" (1992); for Buenos Aires, see Daniel Schávelzon's *The Historical Archaeology of Buenos Aires: A City at the End of the World* (2000); for St. Augustine, see Russel K. Skowronek's "Empire and Ceramics: The Changing Role of Illicit Trade in Spanish America" (1992); for Providence, Rhode Island, see Peter R. Schmidt and Stephen A. Mrozowski's "Documentary Insights into the Archaeology of Smuggling" (1993); and for Venezuela, see Emanuele Amodio, Rodrigo Navarrete Sánchez, and Ana Cristina Rodríguez Yilo, *El Camino de los Españoles: Aproximaciones históricas y arqueológicas al Camino Real Caracas-La Guaira en la época colonial* (1997).

Anthropological work on smuggling in the contemporary Caribbean has also been sparse. Aside from the growing body of political science and international relations works on the contemporary narcotics trade through the region, a handful of anthropologists have carried out ethnographical studies on the subject. For example, Vera Rubin and Lambros Comitas, *Ganja in Jamaica: A Medical Anthropological Study of Chronic Marihuana Use* (1975); Donald R. Hill, *The Impact of Migration on the Metropolitan and Folk Society of Carriacou, Grenada* (1977); Peter M. Tobias, "The Socioeconomic Context of Grenadian Smuggling" (1982); and Hymie Rubenstein, "Coping with Cannabis in a Caribbean Country: From Problem Formulation to Going Public" (1998) and "Reefer Madness Caribbean Style" (2000). The classic ethnographic study of cocaine and marijuana dealers in the United States is Patricia A. Adler's *Wheeling and Dealing: An Ethnography of an Upper-Level Drug Dealing and Smuggling Community* (1985). Philippe Bourgois' *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (1995) details the lives of crack cocaine dealers in Spanish Harlem.

Though specific attention to smuggling in Venezuela has been limited, studies focused on other topics provide essential information for understanding its context as well as the social and productive dynamics of smuggling. In general, Eduardo Arcila Fariás' works on the colonial economy, although perhaps overly focused on the legal trades through the province's main ports, are fundamental: *Economía colonial de Venezuela* (1946) and *Comercio entre Venezuela y México en los siglos XVII y XVIII* (1950). See also Federico Brito Figueroa's *La estructura económica de Venezuela colonial* (1963) and the discussion of productive and consumptive patterns in Aizpurua's *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*. For cacao production and trade, in addition to the

general works, see also Eduardo Arcila Farías, D.F. Maza Zavala, and Federico Brito Figueroa's *La Obra Pía de Chuao, 1568-1825* (1968) and Eugenio Piñero's "The Cacao Economy of the Eighteenth-Century Province of Caracas and the Spanish Cacao Market" (1988), "Accounting Practices in a Colonial Economy: A Case Study of Cacao Haciendas in Venezuela, 1700-1770" (1992), and *The Town of San Felipe and Colonial Cacao Economies* (1994). For broader perspectives on the fruit's cultivation in colonial Latin America, see Murdo J. MacLeod's *Spanish Central America* (1973) and Dauril Alden's "The Significance of Cacao Production in the Amazon Region During the Late Colonial Period: An Essay in Comparative Economic History" (1976).

For tobacco, see Eduardo Arcila Farías' *Historia de un monopolio: El Estanco del Tabaco en Venezuela (1779-1833)* (1977). The trades in hides and mules, inside and outside of the law, have not garnered much attention. On the mule trade, see Aizpurua's "Las mulas venezolanas y el Caribe oriental del siglo XVIII" (1989) as well as his *Temas de historia colonial*. For hide production, trade, and use, see Aizpurua's *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas* and Adelina C. Rodríguez Mirabal's *La formación del latifundio ganadero en los llanos de Apure: 1750-1800* (1987). For the trade in African slaves, see Cornelis Ch. Goslinga, "Curaçao as a Slave-Trading Center During the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1714)" (1977) and Miguel Acosta Saignes, *Vida de los esclavos negros en Venezuela* (1984). For discussions of the import side of Venezuelan smuggling, see Aizpurua and Klooster's studies.

More has been done on the efforts to repress or eliminate extra-legal trade. As one might expect, interest in the Royal Guipuzcoa Company of Caracas has generated a sizable bibliography in English and Spanish. A useful guide is Ildefonso Méndez Salcedo's *La Real Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas: Una relación bibliohemerográfica comentada* (1997). The definitive work in English on the company remains Roland Dennis Hussey's *The Caracas Company: A Study in the History of Spanish Monopolistic Trade* (1934). For the company's role in countering smuggling, see Vicente de Amezaga Aresti's *Hombres de la Compañía Guipuzcoana* (1963) and *Vicente Antonio de Icuza, Comandante de Corsarios* (1966); Aizpurua's *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas*; and Gerardo Vivas Pineda's *La aventura naval de la Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas* (1998). The discussion of counter-smuggling activities in Arauz Monfante's *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe* places the company's efforts in wider context.

The theories and concepts that have guided and inspired this study should be apparent in the text, especially the opening and closing chapters, as well as the notes. The same applies to the works specific to colonial Venezuela that have informed the four case analyses.

Archival Sources

Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Sección La Colonia, Caracas

Archivo de Aragua

Ayuntamientos

Comisos

Diversos

Empleados de la Colonia

Gobernación y Capitanía General

Misiones

Reales Cédulas

Primera Sección

Segunda Sección

Tercera Sección (Copias del Archivo Nacional de Colombia)

Real Compañía Guipuzcoana

Real Hacienda

Libro de Comisos

Libro Común y General de Caracas

Comisos

Composición de Negros de Mala Entrada

Penas de Cámara

Reales Ordenes

Reales Provisiones

Archivo de la Academia Nacional de la Historia de Venezuela (AANHV), Caracas

Registro Principal

Civiles

Judiciales (formerly Cajas Negras)

Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Caracas (AHAC), Caracas

Judiciales

Biblioteca del Consejo Municipal de Caracas, Caracas

Actas del Cabildo de Caracas

Biblioteca Nacional de Venezuela, Caracas

Biblioteca Arcaya

Published Primary Sources

Altolaquirre y Duvalé, Angel de, editor. *Relaciones geográficas de la Gobernación de Venezuela (1767-68)*. Madrid: Imprenta del Patronato de Huérfanos de Administración Militar, 1908.

Cisneros, Joseph Luis de. *Descripción exacta de la Provincia de Venezuela*. Presentación de Guillermo Morón. Estudio preliminar de Pedro Grases. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 149. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1981.

Humboldt, Alexander van. *Viaje a las regiones equinociales del nuevo continente*. 5 volumes. Caracas: Biblioteca Venezolana de Cultura, 1941.

Lavaysse, J.J. Dauxion. *A Statistical, Commercial, and Political Description of Venezuela, Trinidad, Margarita, and Trinidad*. Westport, CT: Negro Universities Press, 1969 [1820].

Marco Dorta, Enrique, editor. *Materiales para la historia de la cultura en Venezuela (1523-1828): Documentos del Archivo General de Indias de Sevilla*. Caracas: Fundación John Boulton, 1967.

Marín, Alfonso, editor. *Actas del Cabildo de la Nueva Valencia del Rey*. 4 volumes. Valencia, Venezuela: Consejo Municipal, 1970-1977.

Olavarriaga, Pedro José de. *Instrucción general y particular del estado presente de la Provincia de Venezuela en los años de 1720 y 1721*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 76. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1965.

Oviedo y Baños, José de. *The Conquest and Settlement of Venezuela*. Translation, introduction, and annotations by Jeannette Johnson Varner. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Pinto, Manuel C., editor. *Documentos para la historia de la Ciudad de San Felipe El Fuerte*. Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1969.

Robinson, David J., editor. *Mil leguas por América: De Lima a Caracas, 1740-1741. Diario de don Miguel de Sasteban*. Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1992.

Robles, Gregorio de. *América a fines del siglo XVII: Noticia de los lugares de contrabando*. Presentación de Demetrio Ramos Pérez. Introducción de Víctor Tau Anzoátegui. Valladolid: Casa-Museo de Colón y Seminario de la Universidad de Valladolid, 1980.

Secondary Sources

Acosta Saignes, Miguel. *Vida de los esclavos negros en Venezuela*. Valencia, Venezuela: Vadell Hermanos, 1984.

Adelman, Jeremy, editor. *Colonial Legacies: The Problem of Persistence in Latin American History*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Adler, Patricia A. *Wheeling and Dealing: An Ethnography of an Upper-Level Drug Dealing and Smuggling Community*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Aizpurua, Ramón. *Curazao y la Costa de Caracas: Introducción al estudio del contrabando de la Provincia de Venezuela en tiempos de la Compañía Guipuzcoana, 1730-1780*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 222. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1993.

- . "Las mulas venezolanas y el Caribe oriental del siglo XVIII." *Tierra Firme* 26 (1989), pp. 125-139.
- . "Municipios: Siglos XVI-XVIII." In Manuel Pérez Vila, editor, *Diccionario de historia de Venezuela*, Volume 2, pp. 1031-1036. Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1988.
- . *Temas de historia colonial de Venezuela y del Caribe*. Trabajo de Ascenso presentado para ascender a la categoría de Profesor Asociado, Escuela de Historia, Facultad de Humanidades y Educación, Universidad Central de Venezuela. Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1996.
- Alden, Dauril. "The Significance of Cacao Production in the Amazon Region During the Late Colonial Period: An Essay in Comparative Economic History." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 120:2 (1976), pp. 103-135.
- Almécija Bermúdez, Juan. *La familia en la Provincia de Venezuela*. Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992.
- Amezaga Aresti, Vicente de. *Hombres de la Compañía Guipuzcoana*. Caracas: Banco Central de Venezuela, 1963.
- . *Vicente Antonio de Icuza: Comandante de Corsarios*. Caracas: Ediciones del Cuatricentenario de Caracas, 1966.
- Amodio, Emanuele, Rodrigo Navarrete Sánchez, and Ana Cristina Rodríguez Yilo. *El Camino de los Españoles: Aproximaciones históricas y arqueológicas al Camino Real Caracas-La Guaira en la época colonial*. Caracas: Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural, 1997.
- Anderson, Benedict. "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams." *New Left Review* 169 (May-June 1988), pp. 3-31.
- Andreas, Peter. "When Policies Collide: Market Reform, Market Prohibition, and the Narcotization of the Mexican Economy." In H. Richard Friman and Peter Andreas, editors, *The Illicit Global Economy and State Power*, pp. 125-141. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1999.
- Andrews, George Reid. "Spanish American Independence: A Structural Analysis." *Latin American Perspectives* 12:1 (1985), pp. 105-132.
- Arauz Monfante, Celestino Andrés. *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe durante la primera mitad del siglo XVIII*. 2 volumes. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Números 168 y 169. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1984.

- Arcila Fariás, Eduardo. *Comercio entre Venezuela y México en los siglos XVI y XVII*. Mexico: Colegio de México, 1950.
- . *Economía colonial de Venezuela*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1946.
- . *Historia de un monopolio: El Estanco del Tabaco en Venezuela (1779-1833)*. Caracas: Ediciones de la Facultad de Humanidades y Educación, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1977.
- Arcila Fariás, Eduardo, D.F. Maza Zavala, and Federico Brito Figueroa. *La Obra Pía de Chuao, 1568-1825*. Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1968.
- Arrighi, Giovanni. *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times*. London: Verso, 1996 [1994].
- Avellán de Tamayo, Nieves. *La Nueva Segovia de Barquijimeto*. 2 volumes. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Números 213 y 214. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1992.
- Bacalao Silva, Pedro. *Orígenes y referencias de Montalbán. El centenario de Bejuma*. Second edition. 1949.
- Barka, Norman F. "Citizens of St. Eustatius, 1781: A Historical and Archaeological Study." In Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman, editors, *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, pp. 223-238. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996.
- Baud, Michiel. "A Colonial Counter Economy: Tobacco Production on Española, 1500-1870." *New West Indian Guide* 65:1 & 2 (1991), pp. 27-49.
- Benítez Rojo, Antonio. *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. Translated by James E. Maraniss. Second Edition. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996 [1992].
- Ben-Ner, Avner, and Louis Putterman, editors. *Economics, Values, and Organization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Benton, Lauren. "Beyond Legal Pluralism: Towards a New Approach to Law in the Informal Sector." *Social and Legal Studies* 3 (1994), pp. 223-242.
- . "Colonial Law and Cultural Difference: Jurisdictional Politics and the Formation of the Colonial State." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41:3 (1999), pp. 563-588.
- . "From the World Systems Perspective to Institutional World History: Culture and Economy in Global Theory." *Journal of World History* 7:2 (1996), pp. 261-295.

- . *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Blok, Anton. *Honour and Violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001.
- . "Infamous Occupations." In Anton Blok, *Honour and Violence*, pp. 44-68. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001.
- . *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860-1960*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975 [1974].
- Borges, Analola. *La casa de Austria en Venezuela durante la guerra de sucesión española (1702-1715)*. Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Goya Arte Gráficas, 1963.
- Bourgois, Philippe. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Boxer, C.R. *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800*. New York: Penguin Books, 1990 [1965].
- Bravo Dávila, Luis A. *Cambio social, criminalidad y control del crimen en Margarita (1960-1968)*. Caracas: Consejo de Desarrollo Científico y Humano, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1993.
- Briceño Perozo, Mario. "Estudio preliminar." In Pedro José de Olavarriaga, *Instrucción general y particular del estado presente de la Provincia de Venezuela en los años de 1720 y 1721*, pp. 11-203. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 76. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1965.
- Brito Figueroa, Federico. *La estructura económica de Venezuela colonial*. Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1978.
- Brown, Vera Lee. "Contraband Trade: A Factor in the Decline of Spain's Empire in America." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 8 (1928), pp. 178-189.
- Capriles Méndez, Ruth, editor. *Diccionario de la corrupción en Venezuela*. 2 volumes. Caracas: Consorcio de Ediciones Capriles, 1989-1990.
- Carrera Damas, Germán. *La crisis de la sociedad colonial*. Caracas: Facultad de Humanidades y Letras, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1971.
- Carrocera, Padre Buenaventura de. *Misión de los capuchinos en los llanos de Caracas*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Números 111, 112 y 113. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1972.

- Cartay Angulo, Rafael. *Ideología, desarrollo e interferencias del comercio caribeño durante el siglo XVII*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 196. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1988.
- Castellanos, Rafael Ramón. *Historia de la pulpería en Venezuela*. Caracas: Editorial Cabildo, 1988.
- Chance, John K. *Conquest of the Sierra: Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Oaxaca*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989.
- . *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978.
- Conway, Dennis. "Microstates in a Macroworld." In Thomas Klak, editor, *Globalization and Neoliberalism: The Caribbean Context*, pp. 51-63. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998.
- Coronil, Fernando. "Magical Illusions or Revolutionary Magic? Chávez in Historical Context." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 33:6 (May/June 2000), pp. 34-42.
- . *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- . "Smelling Like a Market." Review of James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. *American Historical Review* 106:1 (2001), pp. 119-129.
- Coughlin, Magdalen. "Boston Smugglers on the Coast (1797-1821): An Insight into the American Acquisition of California." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 46:2 (1967), pp. 99-120.
- Dao, Miguel Elías. *Morón de Venezuela: Panorama histórico y geográfico del Municipio Juan José Mora*. Caracas: Italgráfica, 1984.
- Davis, Ralph. *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973.
- Deagan, Kathleen A. "After Columbus: The Sixteenth-Century Spanish-Caribbean Frontier." In Kathleen A. Deagan, editor, *Puerto Real: The Archaeology of a Sixteenth-Century Spanish Town in Hispaniola*, pp. 419-456. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995.
- , editor. *Puerto Real: The Archaeology of a Sixteenth-Century Spanish Town in Hispaniola*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995.

Deagan, Kathleen A., and José María Cruxent. *Columbus's Outpost among the Tainos: Spain and America at La Isabela, 1493-1498*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Deagan, Kathleen A., and Elizabeth J. Reitz. "Merchants and Cattlemen: The Archaeology of a Commercial Structure at Puerto Real." In Kathleen A. Deagan, editor, *Puerto Real: The Archaeology of a Sixteenth-Century Spanish Town in Hispaniola*, pp. 231-284. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995.

Dethlefsen, Edwin. "The Historical Archaeology of St. Eustatius." *Journal of New World Archaeology* 5:2 (1982), pp. 73-86.

Dethlefsen, Edwin, Stephen J. Gluckman, R. Duncan Mathewson, and Norman Barka. "Archaeology on St. Eustatius: The Pompeii of the New World." *Archaeology* 35:2 (March/April 1982), pp. 8-15.

Díaz Vázquez, Ramón. "Evolución social de Venezuela (hasta 1960)." In Mariano Picón Salas, Augusto Mijares, and Ramón Díaz Vázquez, *Venezuela independiente: Evolución político-social, 1810-1960*, pp. 175-379. Caracas: Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, 1975.

Doyle, William. "Abolishing the Sale of Offices: Ambitions, Ambiguities, and Myths." *Canadian Journal of History* 32:3 (1997), pp. 339-345.

———. "The Sale of Offices in French History." *History Today* 46:9 (1996), pp. 39-44.

———. *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth-Century France*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Duncan Barreta, Silvio R., and John Markoff. "Civilization and Barbarism: Cattle Frontiers in Latin America." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20:4 (1978), pp. 587-620.

Emmer, P.C. *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy, 1580-1880: Trade, Slavery, and Emancipation*. Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1998.

———. "'Jesus Christ Was Good, but Trade Was Better': An Overview of the Transit Trade of the Dutch Antilles." In Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman, editors, *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, pp. 206-222. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996.

Ewen, Charles R. *From Spaniard to Creole: The Archaeology of Cultural Formation at Puerto Real, Haiti*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991.

Farer, Tom, editor. *Transnational Crime in the Americas*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

- Felice Cardot, Carlos. *Curazao hispánico (antagonismo flamenco-español)*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 115. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1973.
- . “Noticias sobre la visita acordada a la Provincia de Venezuela, en 1720, por el Virrey del Nuevo Reino de Granada Jorge de Villalonga. Visitador Pedro Martín Beato.” In *Memoria del Segundo Congreso Venezolano de Historia*, Tomo I, pp. 311-337. Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1975.
- . *La rebelión de Andresote (Valles de Yaracuy, 1730-1733)*. Second edition. Bogotá: Editorial ABC, 1957.
- . “Rebelión de Andresote.” In Manuel Pérez Vila, editor, *Diccionario de historia de Venezuela*, volume 3, pp. 305-306. Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1988.
- . *Rebeliones, motines y movimientos de masas en el siglo XVIII venezolano (1730-1781)*. Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1961.
- Feliciano Ramos, Héctor R. *El contrabando inglés en el Caribe y el Golfo de México (1748-1778)*. Seville: Publicaciones de la Excma. Diputación Provincial de Sevilla, 1990.
- Ferry, Robert J. *The Colonial Elite of Caracas: Formation and Crisis, 1567-1767*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
- . “La esclavitud, el contrabando y los Tenientes de Justicia: Control del interior de Caracas en el siglo XVIII.” In *Congreso Bicentenario de Simón Bolívar*, Volume II, pp. 97-142. Caracas: Italgráfica, Academia Nacional de la Historia de Venezuela, 1985.
- Gallant, Thomas W. “Brigandage, Piracy, Capitalism, and State-Formation: Transnational Crime from a Historical World-Systems Perspective.” In Josiah McC. Heyman, editor, *States and Illegal Practices*, pp. 25-61. Oxford: Berg, 1999.
- Gambetta, Diego. *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- García Chuecos, Héctor. *Siglo dieciocho venezolano*. Caracas: Ediciones Edime, 1956.
- Garriga, Gorgias R. *Fichas, señas y ñapas de Venezuela*. Caracas: Cuadernos Lagoven, 1979.
- Garrigus, Paul. “Blue and Brown: Contraband Indigo and the Rise of a Free Coloured Planter Class in French Saint-Domingue.” *The Americas* 52:3 (1993), pp. 233-264.
- Gibson, Charles. *Spain in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1967 [1966].

Gil Fortoul, José. *Historia constitucional de Venezuela*. 3 volumes. Caracas: Librería Piñango, 1967 [1909].

Gilbert, Geoffrey N. "Baltimore's Flour Trade to the Caribbean, 1750-1815." Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1975.

Goodman, Louis W., Johanna Mendelson Forman, Moisés Naím, Joseph S. Tulchin, and Gary Bland. "Introduction: The Decline of Venezuelan Exceptionalism." In Louis W. Goodman, Johanna Mendelson Forman, Moisés Naím, Joseph S. Tulchin, and Gary Bland, editors, *Lessons of the Venezuelan Experience*, pp. 3-27. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995.

——, editors. *Lessons of the Venezuelan Experience*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995.

Goslinga, Cornelis Ch. "Curaçao as a Slave-Trading Center During the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1714)." *New West Indian Guide* 52 (1977), pp. 1-50.

——. *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas, 1680-1791*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1985.

——. *The Dutch in the Caribbean and on the Wild Coast, 1580-1680*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1971.

Grahn, Lance R. "An Insoluble Dilemma: Smuggling in New Granada, 1713-1763." In John R. Fisher, Allan J. Kuethe, and Anthony McFarlane, editors, *Reform and Insurrection in Bourbon New Granada and Peru*, pp. 123-146. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990.

——. *The Political Economy of Smuggling: Regional Informal Economies in Early Bourbon New Granada*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997.

Griffith, Ivelaw L. "Drugs and Economics in the Caribbean." In Irma T. Alonso, editor, *Caribbean Economies in the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 177-201. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002.

——, editor. *The Political Economy of Drugs in the Caribbean*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Haufler, Virginia. *Dangerous Commerce: Insurance and the Management of International Risk*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Hernández González, Manuel. *Los canarios en la Venezuela colonial (1670-1810)*. Arafo, Tenerife, Spain: Taller de Historia, 1999.

- Herrera de Weishaar, María Luisa, and Carmen Alida Soto. *Guía del Archivo General de la Nación*. Caracas: Archivo General de la Nación, 1984.
- Herzog, Tamar. "De la autoridad al poder: Quito, los Larrea y la herencia inmaterial, siglos XVII y XVIII." In Ronald Escobedo Mansilla, Ana de Zaballa Beascochea, and Oscar Alvarez Gila, editors, *Emigración y redes sociales de los vascos en América*, pp. 373-383. Vitoria-Gasteiz, Basque Country, Spain: Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, 1996.
- Heyman, Josiah McC, editor. *States and Illegal Practices*. New York: Berg, 1999.
- Heyman, Josiah McC. and Alan Smart. "States and Illegal Practices: An Overview." In Josiah McC. Heyman, editor, *States and Illegal Practices*, pp. 1-24. New York: Berg, 1999.
- Higman, Barry. "The Sugar Revolution." *Economic History Review* 53:2 (2000), pp. 213-236.
- Hill, Donald R. *The Impact of Migration on the Metropolitan and Folk Society of Carriacou, Grenada*. Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Volume 54, Number 2. New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1977.
- Hoetink, Harry. "The Dominican Republic in the Twentieth Century: Notes on Mobility and Stratification." *New West Indian Guide* 74:3 & 4 (2000), pp. 209-233.
- Hussey, Roland Dennis. *The Caracas Company: A Study in the History of Spanish Monopolistic Trade*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934.
- Israel, Jonathan I. *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Izard, Miguel. *El miedo a la revolución, 1777-1830*. Madrid: Tecnos, 1979.
- . "Ni cuatreros ni montoneros, llaneros." *Boletín Americanista* 31 (1981), pp. 83-142.
- . *Orejanos, cimarrones y arrochelados*. Barcelona: Sendai Ediciones, 1988.
- Jackson, Robert. *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- James, Preston E. *Introduction to Latin America: The Geographic Background of Economic and Political Problems*. New York: Odyssey Press, 1964.

- Jelambi, Octabio. *Cuatrocientos cuarenta y siete años del Lago de Valencia*. Caracas: Academia de Ciencias Físicas, Matemáticas y Naturales, 1995.
- Johnson, Lyman L. "The Silversmiths of Buenos Aires: A Case Study in the Failure of Corporate Social Organization." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 8:2 (1976), pp. 181-213.
- Joseph, J.W., and Stephen C. Bryne. "Socio-Economics and Trade in Viejo San Juan, Puerto Rico: Observations from the Ballajá Archaeological Project." *Historical Archaeology* 26:1 (1992), pp. 45-58.
- Karl, Terry Lynn. *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Kicza, John E. *Colonial Entrepreneurs: Families and Business in Bourbon Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983.
- . "The Great Families of Mexico: Elite Maintenance and Business Practices in Late Colonial Mexico City." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 62:3 (1982), pp. 429-457.
- Kinsbruner, Jay. *Petty Capitalism in Spanish America: The Pulperos of Puebla, Mexico City, Caracas, and Buenos Aires*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.
- Kitner, Kathi R. "The Veneer of Modernity: Tourism and Cultural Transformation on Isla Margarita, Venezuela." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1996.
- Klooster, Wim. *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648-1795*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998.
- . "Subordinate but Proud: Curaçao's Free Blacks and Mulattoes in the Eighteenth Century." *New West Indian Guide* 68:3 (1994), pp. 283-300.
- Knight, Franklin W., and Peggy K. Liss, editors. *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.
- Kohli, Atul, and Vivienne Shue. "State Power and Social Forces: On Political Contention and Accommodation in the Third World." In Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, editors. *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World*, pp. 293-326. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Lacey, Robert. *Little Man: Meyer Lansky and the Gangster Life*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1991.

- Ladera de Diez, Elizabeth. *Contribución al estudio de la aristocracia territorial en Venezuela colonial: La familia Xérez de Aristeguieta, siglo 18*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 209. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia de Venezuela, 1990.
- Lane, Frederick C. "Economic Consequences of Organized Violence." *Journal of Economic History* 28 (1958), pp. 401-417.
- Langue, Frédérique. "Historiografía colonial de Venezuela, pautas, circunstancias y una pregunta: ¿También se fue la historiografía de la colonia detrás del caballo de Bolívar?" *Revista de Indias* 61:222 (2001), pp. 247-265.
- Lockhart, James, and Stuart B. Schwartz. *Early Latin America: A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989 [1983].
- Lokken, Paul Thomas. "From Black to *Ladino*: People of African Descent, *Mestizaje*, and Racial Hierarchy in Rural Colonial Guatemala, 1600-1730." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 2000.
- Lombardi, John V. "La invención de Venezuela en el marco del sistema mundial: El siglo de transición, 1750-1850." *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* (Caracas) 83:332 (2000), pp. 5-33.
- . *People and Places in Colonial Venezuela*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976.
- . "Prologue: Venezuela's Permanent Dilemma." In Steve Ellner and Daniel Hellinger, editors, *Venezuelan Politics in the Chávez Era: Class, Polarization, and Conflict*, pp. 1-6. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003.
- . *Venezuela: The Search for Order, the Dream of Progress*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Lucena Salmoral, Manuel. "El sistema de cuadrillas de ronda para la seguridad de los llanos a fines del período colonial: Los antecedentes de las Ordenanzas de Llanos de 1811." In *Memoria del Tercer Congreso Venezolano de Historia*, Tomo II, pp. 189-225. Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1979.
- Lugar, Catherine. "Merchants." In Louisa Schell Hoberman and Susan Migden Socolow, editors, *Cities and Society in Colonial Latin America*, pp. 47-75. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986.

- MacLeod, Murdo J. "From the Mediterranean to the Indigenous People of Colonial Guatemala: The Evolution of the *Cofradía*." In Ueli Hostettler and Matthew Restall, editors, *Maya Survivalism*, pp. 101-111. Markt Schwaben: Verlag Anton Sauerwein, 2001.
- . "The Primitive Nation State, Delegation of Functions, and Results: Some Examples from Early Colonial Central America." In Karen Spalding, editor, *Essays in the Political, Economic, and Social History of Latin America*, pp. 53-68. University of Delaware Latin American Studies Program, Occasional Papers and Monographs, Number 3. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Latin American Studies Program, 1982.
- . "Some Thoughts on the Pax Colonial, Colonial Violence, and Perceptions of Both." In Susan Schroeder, editor, *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*, pp. 129-142. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- . *Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History, 1520-1720*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
- Magallanes, Manuel Vicente. *Luchas e insurrecciones en la Venezuela colonial*. Caracas: Editorial Tiempo Nuevo, 1972.
- Maingot, Anthony P. "The Decentralization Imperative and Caribbean Criminal Enterprises." In Tom Farer, editor, *Transnational Crime in the Americas*, pp. 143-170. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Majella Bastidas, Gloria. "Este proceso revolucionario ha sido provocado arteramente." Interview with Graciela Soriano de García-Pelayo. *El Nacional* (Caracas), Sunday, May 12, 2002.
- Manzo Núñez, Torcuato. *Historia del Estado Carabobo*. Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1981.
- . "Montalbán, hijo de la pugna racial." *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* (Caracas) 62:247 (1979), pp. 621-639.
- Marx, Gary T. "Ironies of Social Control: Authorities as Contributors to Deviance Through Escalation, Nonenforcement, and Covert Facilitation." *Social Problems* 28:3 (1981), pp. 221-246.
- Marx, Robert F. *Pirate Port: The Story of the Sunken City of Port Royal*. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1967.
- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Translated by W.D. Halls. Forward by Mary Douglas. London: Routledge, 1990 [1950].

- Mayes, Philip. *Port Royal, Jamaica: Excavations, 1969-1970*. Kingston: Jamaica National Trust Commission, 1972.
- Mayes, Philip, and P.A. Mayes. "Port Royal, Jamaica: The Archaeological Problems and Potential." *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 1 (1972), pp. 97-112.
- Maza Zavala, D.F. "La estructura económica de una plantación colonial en Venezuela." In Eduardo Arcila Farías, D.F. Maza Zavala, and Federico Brito Figueroa, *La Obra Pía de Chuao, 1568-1825*, pp. 51-112. Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1968.
- McKinley, P. Michael. *Pre-Revolutionary Caracas: Politics, Economy, and Society, 1777-1811*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Meillassoux, Claude. "From Reproduction to Production: A Marxist Approach to Economic Anthropology." *Economy and Society* 1 (1972), pp. 93-105.
- Méndez Salcedo, Ildefonso. *La Real Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas: Una relación biblio-hemerográfica comentada*. Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1997.
- Mendoza, Irma Marina. "El cabildo de pardos de Nirgua, siglos XVII y XVIII." *Anuario de Estudios Bolivarianos* 4:4 (1995), pp. 95-120.
- Migdal, Joel S. "Introduction: Developing a State-In-Society Perspective." In Joel S. Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, editors, *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World*, pp. 1-4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- . *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Mintz, Sidney W. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin, 1987 [1985].
- Morales Padrón, Francisco. *Rebelión contra la Compañía de Caracas*. Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1955.
- Morón, Guillermo. *Historia de la Provincia de Venezuela*. Caracas: Concejo Municipal del Distrito Federal, 1977.
- Moutoukias, Zacarías. "Power, Corruption, and Commerce: The Making of the Local Administrative Structure in Seventeenth-Century Buenos Aires." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 68:4 (1988), pp. 771-801.

- . *Contrabando y control colonial en el siglo XVII: Buenos Aires, el Atlántico y el espacio peruano*. Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1988.
- Nelson, George H. "Contraband Trade under the Asiento, 1730-1739." *American Historical Review* 51:1 (1945), pp. 55-67.
- North, Douglass C. "Transaction Costs in History." *Journal of European Economic History* 14 (Winter 1985), pp. 557-576.
- Paquette, Robert L., and Stanley L. Engerman, editors. *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996.
- Pares, Richard. *Yankees and Creoles: The Trade Between North America and the West Indies Before the American Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956.
- Parris, Scott V. "Alliance and Competition: Four Case Studies of Maroon-European Relations." *New West Indian Guide* 55:3 & 4 (1981), pp. 174-224.
- Parry, J.H. *The Sale of Public Office in the Spanish Indies Under the Hapsburgs*. Ibero-Americana, Number 37. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953.
- . *The Spanish Seaborne Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990 [1966].
- Patch, Robert W. *Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1648-1812*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
- Peattie, Lisa Redfield. *The View from the Barrio*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968.
- Pedreira, Jorge M. "Contraband, Crisis, and the Collapse of the Old Colonial System." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 81:3 & 4 (2001), pp. 739-744.
- . "From Growth to Collapse: Portugal, Brazil, and the Breakdown of the Old Colonial System (1760-1830)." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80:4 (2000), pp. 839-864.
- Perazzo, Nicolás. "Hacia la historia de San Felipe." In Manuel C. Pinto, editor, *Documentos para la historia de la ciudad de San Felipe el Fuerte*, pp. 14-15. Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1969.
- . *Hechos y nombres del Yaracuy*. San Felipe: Tip. La Unica, C.A., 1968.
- . *Historia del Estado Yaracuy*. Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República, 1982.

- Perera, Ambrosio. *Historia de la organización de pueblos antiguos de Venezuela. Génesis, desarrollo y consolidación de pueblos venezolanos: Pueblos coloniales de Barquisimeto, El Tocuyo, Carora, San Felipe y Nirgua*. 3 volumes. Madrid: Juan Bravo, 1964.
- Pérez Perdomo, Rogelio. "Corruption and Political Crisis." In Louis W. Goodman, Johanna Mendelson Forman, Moisés Naím, Joseph S. Tulchin, and Gary Bland, editors. *Lessons of the Venezuelan Experience*, pp. 311-333. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995.
- Pérotin-Dumon, Anne. "The Pirate and the Emperor: Power and the Law on the Seas, 1450-1850." In J.D. Tracy, editor, *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires*, pp. 196-227. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Picón Salas, Mariano, Augusto Mijares, and Ramón Díaz Vásquez. *Venezuela independiente: Evolución político-social, 1810-1960*. Caracas: Fundación Eugenio Mendoza, 1975.
- Pijning, Ernst. "Conflicts in the Portuguese Colonial Administration: Trials and Errors of Luís Lopes Pegado e Serpa, *Provedor-Mor da Fazenda Real* in Salvador, Brazil, 1718-1721." *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 2:4 (1993), pp. 403-423.
- . "A New Interpretation of Contraband Trade." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 81:3 & 4 (2001), pp. 733-738.
- Pikaza, Otto. "Don Gabriel José de Zuloaga en la gobernación de Venezuela (1737-1747)." *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 19 (1962), pp. 501-695.
- . *Don Gabriel José de Zuloaga en la gobernación de Venezuela (1737-1747)*. Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1963.
- Pike, Frederick B. "The Municipality and the System of Checks and Balances in Spanish Colonial Administration." *The Americas* 15 (1958), pp. 139-158.
- Piñero, Eugenio. "The Cacao Economy of the Eighteenth-Century Province of Caracas and the Spanish Cacao Market." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 68:1 (1988), pp. 75-100.
- . "Accounting Practices in a Colonial Economy: A Case Study of Cacao Haciendas in Venezuela, 1700-1770." *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 1:1 (1992), pp. 37-66.
- . *The Town of San Felipe and Colonial Cacao Economies*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Volume 84, Part 3. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1994.

Posthumus, Nicolaas Wilhelmus. *Inquiry into the History of the Prices in Holland*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1943.

Quintero, Gilberto. *El teniente justicia mayor en la administración colonial venezolana: Aproximación a su estudio histórico jurídico*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 231. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1996.

Rengifo, Diana. "La gobernación del canario Marcos de Betancourt, en la provincia de Venezuela, 1716-1720: El problema del contrabando." With an "Introducción" by Rafael Armando Rojas. *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* (Caracas) 59:235 (1976), pp. 498-516.

Reuter, Peter. *Disorganized Crime: The Economics of the Visible Hand*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983.

Robinson, David J. *The Analysis of Eighteenth-Century Spanish American Cities: Some Problems and Alternative Solutions*. Discussion Paper Series, Department of Geography, Syracuse University, Number 4. Syracuse: Department of Geography, Syracuse University, 1975.

——, editor. *Migration in Colonial Spanish America*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Rodríguez, José Angel. "Clandestinidad, contrabando y consumo del aguardiente de caña en Venezuela en el siglo XVIII." *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* (Caracas) 6:261 (1983), pp. 145-160.

——. "Venezuelan Rums in the Nineteenth Century." In Erik Aerts, Louis M. Cullen, and Richard G. Wilson, editors, *Production, Marketing, and Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages since the Late Middle Ages*, pp. 56-67. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990.

Rodríguez Mirabal, Adelina C. *La formación del latifundio ganadero en los llanos de Apure: 1750-1800*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 193. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1987.

Rodríguez Rivero, Plácido Daniel. *Origen y desarrollo de San Felipe "El Fuerte."* Caracas: Talleres Gráficos del Congreso de la República, 1979.

Rose-Ackerman, Susan. "Bribes and Gifts." In Avner Ben-Ner and Louis Putterman, editors, *Economics, Values, and Organization*, pp. 296-328. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

- Rubenstein, Hymie. "Reefer Madness Caribbean Style." *Journal of Drug Issues* 30:3 (2000), pp. 465-498.
- Salvucci, Linda K. "Supply, Demand, and the Making of a Market: Philadelphia and Havana at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century." In Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, editors, *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650-1850*, pp. 40-57. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.
- Samudio A., Edda, and David J. Robinson. *Jesuit Estates of the College of Mérida, Venezuela: 1629-1767*. Discussion Paper Series, Number 99. Syracuse, NY: Department of Geography, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1989.
- Scharfenberg, Ewald. "Chávez usa los medios como un dictador africano." *El Nacional* (Caracas), Sunday, December 15, 2002.
- Schávelzon, Daniel. *The Historical Archaeology of Buenos Aires: A City at the End of the World*. Translated by Alex Lomonaco. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2000.
- Schelling, Thomas C. *Choice and Consequence*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- . "Economics and Criminal Enterprise." *The Public Interest* 7 (Spring 1967), pp. 61-78.
- . "What Is the Business of Organized Crime?" *Journal of Public Law* [now *Emory Law Journal*] 20 (1971), pp. 71-84.
- Schmidt, Peter R., and Stephen A. Mrozowski. "Documentary Insights into the Archaeology of Smuggling." In Mary C. Beaudry, editor, *Documentary Archaeology in the New World*, pp. 32-42. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993 [1988].
- Scott, James C. *Comparative Political Corruption*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972.
- . "Corruption, Machine Politics, and Political Change." *American Political Science Review* 63:4 (1969), pp. 1142-1158.
- . "Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia." *American Political Science Review* 66:1 (1972), pp. 91-113.
- Sharp, William Frederick. *Slavery on the Spanish Frontier: The Colombian Chocó, 1680-1810*. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1976.

- Silva Alvarez, Alberto. "La medicina en el Yaracuy durante la época colonial." In *El Estado Yaraucy*, pp. 59-65. Caracas: Dirección de Cultura, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1966.
- Skowronek, Russel K. "Empire and Ceramics: The Changing Role of Illicit Trade in Spanish America." *Historical Archaeology* 26:1 (1992), pp. 109-118.
- Sluiter, Engel. "Dutch-Spanish Rivalry in the Caribbean Area, 1594-1609." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 27 (1948), pp. 165-196.
- Socolow, Susan M. *The Bureaucrats of Buenos Aires, 1769-1810: Amor al Real Servicio*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1987.
- . *The Merchants of Buenos Aires, 1778-1810: Family and Commerce*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Soto Castellanos, Carmen Alida, and María Luisa Herrera de Weishaar. *Guía al Archivo Arquidiocesano de Caracas*. Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1996.
- Stahl, Jeremy D. "Production, Commerce, and Transportation in a Regional Economy: Tucumán, 1776-1801." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1994.
- Sucre, Luis Alberto. *Gobernadores y Capitanes Generales de Venezuela*. Second edition. Caracas: Tipografía Tecnocolor, 1964 [1928].
- Swart, K.W. *The Sale of Offices in the Seventeenth Century*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1949.
- Texera Arnal, Yolanda. "Médicos y cirujanos pardos 'en condición de por ahora' en la Provincia de Venezuela, siglo XVIII." *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 8:3 (1999), pp. 321-338.
- Thomson, Janice E. *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995 [1990].
- . "Reflections on the History of European State Making." In Charles Tilly, editor, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, pp. 3-83. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

- . "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol, editors, *Bringing the State Back In*, pp. 169-191. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Tobias, Peter M. "The Socioeconomic Context of Grenadian Smuggling." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 38:4 (1982), pp. 383-400.
- Troconis de Veracoechea, Ermila. "Rebelión del Negro Miguel." In Manuel Pérez Vila, editor, *Diccionario de historia de Venezuela*, volume 3, pp. 309-310. Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1988.
- . "Régimen español." In Manuel Pérez Vila, editor, *Diccionario de historia de Venezuela*, second edition, volume 3, pp. 849-854. Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1997 [1988].
- Trujillo, León. *Motín y sublevación en San Felipe*. Caracas: Jaime Villegas, 1955.
- . "Pueblos de misión." In *El Estado Yaracuy*, pp. 49-58. Caracas: Dirección de Cultura, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1966.
- Vaccari San Miguel, Letizia. *Sobre gobernadores y residencias en la Provincia de Venezuela (siglos XVI, XVII, XVIII)*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 217. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1992.
- Varela Marcos, Jesús. *Las Salinas de Araya y el origen de la Armada de Barlovento*. Fuentes para la Historia Colonial de Venezuela, Número 146. Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1980.
- Velandia, Karenina. "Al benefactor de Güiría le aguarda una sentencia por narcotráfico." *El Nacional* (Caracas), Sunday, October 6, 2002.
- . "Un operativo sorpresa llevó a 'León Cachito' a la cárcel." *El Nacional* (Caracas), Sunday, October 6, 2002.
- Vivas Pineda, Gerardo. *La aventura naval de la Compañía Guipuzcoana de Caracas*. Caracas: Fundación Polar, 1998.
- Waldron, Kathleen. "A Social History of a Primate City." Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1979.
- Wolf, Eric R. *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997 [1982].

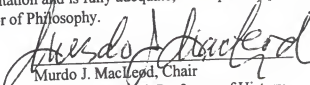
Zahedieh, Nuala. "The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655-1692." *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 43:4 (October 1986), pp. 570-593.

———. "Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in Early English Jamaica, 1655-1689." *Economic History Review*, Second Series, 39:2 (1986), pp. 205-222.

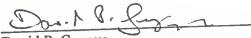
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jeremy David Cohen was born in 1971 in Bakersfield, California, and grew up on the Monterey Peninsula. He obtained a bachelor's degree in history and Spanish from Amherst College in 1993 and has pursued his graduate studies at the University of Florida since 1994. In 1997 he received a master's degree in anthropology. That same year he entered the doctoral program in Latin American history.

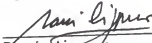
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Murdo J. Macleod, Chair
Graduate Research Professor of History

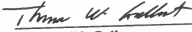
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


David P. Geggus
Professor of History

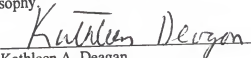
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Ramón Aizpuru
Associate Professor of History
Universidad Central de Venezuela

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Thomas W. Gallant
Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Kathleen A. Deagan
Distinguished Research Professor of
Anthropology

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 2003

Dean, Graduate School